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# PUBLIC PERSONNEL REVIEW

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## *THE CIVIL SERVICE ASSEMBLY*

**T**HE Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada is an association of public agencies, officials, and private citizens engaged or interested in public personnel administration. The constituent public agencies of the Assembly are civil service commissions and boards, or personnel offices serving a particular governmental department or division. They serve national, state, and local governments of the United States, and Dominion, provincial, and local areas in Canada. The Assembly was organized in 1906 by officials and others actually engaged in civil service and other public personnel activities in order to provide mutual help in meeting common problems and to improve public personnel administration. A Headquarters Office has been established at 1313 East 60th Street in Chicago, Illinois, to serve as a clearinghouse for information on public personnel matters.

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# Federal Grants to State and Local Personnel Agencies<sup>1</sup>

LEONARD D. WHITE

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**W**E HAVE now become well accustomed to federal interest in and assistance to personnel work in state and local governments. Piece by piece an increasing number of federal aids have been offered and accepted, partly in connection with fiscal grants, partly as wholly federal expenditures. In general the results have been satisfactory to all parties to these mutual agreements and services. It seems likely that they will increase in number and usefulness.

Instances of these joint relationships already make an impressive list. As one example, federal, state, and county governments have cooperated for a quarter century in the maintenance of the network of county agents. Costs are borne in part by all three levels of government; programs are approved by all three; the selection of county agents is made locally by the county, subject to approval by the state extension officers; the standards of training, experience, and competence of the county agents are subject to approval by the Extension Division of the United States Department of Agriculture. A national minimum of technical competence is thus substantially achieved along with a high degree of local responsibility.

Again, in the field of public service train-

ing, the Federal Bureau of Investigation offers special training courses open to local law enforcement officials. The cost of instruction is carried wholly by federal appropriation; leave of absence with pay, together with traveling expenses, is usually supplied by the local governmental authority. The Bureau of Standards of the Department of Labor initiated training courses for state and local factory inspectors in 1936 at Johns Hopkins University. The cost of instruction is wholly within the federal budget. In recent years the United States Public Health Service has allotted over a million dollars annually to state and local health departments to enable presently employed health officers to take educational leave for advanced work in their field.

In 1936 Congress passed the George-Deen Act, a measure of considerable significance in the training of state and local public employees. One section of the Act provided grants to states for training in public service occupations. These grants have been devoted in considerable measure to improving the efficiency of the civil uniformed forces—a choice which may prove prophetically significant.

The original terms of the Social Security Act authorized and directed the Social Security Board to approve plans for joint operation which made adequate provisions for efficient administration, but specifically excluded the selection, tenure of office, and compensation of personnel. This highly ambiguous, not to say contradictory provision, was modified by the amendments of 1939. Four years' experience had convinced Con-

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<sup>1</sup>This article is adapted from a paper delivered before a meeting of the San Francisco Bay Area chapter of the American Society for Public Administration.

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gress that it was desirable to secure minimum state and county personnel standards by requiring the adoption in each state of the merit system for local administration of these joint federal-state enterprises.

Regulations established by the Social Security Board set up the minimum framework of a merit system for cooperating state and county offices; the system has now been put in operation in each of the states where a merit system was absent; the transitional difficulties are gradually disappearing; and the efficiency of the joint services has been substantially improved.

In times of crisis and emergency most normal trends are accelerated and this crisis is no exception. The United States Civil Service Commission has recently been authorized by executive order to make use of state and local registers, with the consent of the proper authorities. In cooperation with the Civil Service Assembly, the Commission is now conducting a special inquiry, under the direction of Henry F. Hubbard, to ascertain in what ways more effective coordination may be worked out.

**T**HESE are by no means the only examples of federal interest in and assistance to the personnel systems of states and localities. By almost necessary implication, every conditional grant-in-aid involves potential concern about the adequacy of the administrative system of the cooperating state, at the heart of which is man power. Conditional grants are now an accepted form of federal-state coordination, well established in the administration of highways, health, forests, vocational education, child and maternal welfare, employment offices, housing, and old-age assistance. New grants in education, health insurance, and perhaps other fields seem early probabilities.

The main stream of administrative development seems to be moving in the direction of a new federal grant to state and local governments for further assistance in the maintenance and operation of state and local personnel systems. The advantages of such a

grant, carefully thought out and safeguarded, appear to be very substantial and in this article is proposed a plan for consideration by those most directly concerned. The preliminary outlines of the plan will first be set forth, followed by my understanding of its objectives, the reasons which seem to me to warrant its adoption in the early future, and a brief survey of some objections which will require consideration.

#### FEDERAL GRANTS FOR STATE AND LOCAL PERSONNEL AGENCIES

**I** RECOMMEND an annual grant by the federal government to such state and local personnel agencies as may be authorized and may desire to take advantage thereof. The grant should consist of two parts, as follows:

1. An unconditional grant sufficient to meet all federally incurred expenditures not otherwise covered, plus a small percentage of the total expenses of the state or local agency—at the outset perhaps not more than ten per cent<sup>2</sup>.

2. A conditional grant varying in amount according to the degree and form of cooperation, designed to meet the federal share of joint programs such as, for example, jointly held examinations, special technical studies, the development of coordinated plans in recruiting, testing, training, and other fields where some degree of coordination may be desirable, and especially (looking ahead) the administrative expenses of approved state and local retirement systems for public employees. This conditional grant would also include contributions to the salaries of the overhead managerial staff and the technical professional staff, presumably on a dollar for dollar basis.

<sup>2</sup> There are no reliable figures showing personnel expenditures by state, county, municipal, and other local central personnel agencies. An estimate indicates that an outside figure would be an annual expenditure of not more than \$7,500,000. This excludes the expenditures of the federal Civil Service Commission, now running over \$8,000,000 annually. A federal block grant of 10 per cent would thus be estimated at less than \$750,000, assuming that all eligible agencies elected to participate.



A state or local jurisdiction could take advantage of either the unconditional or the conditional grant or both. The grants would be administered by the United States Civil Service Commission, which would require the organization of an entirely new division for the purpose.

**T**HESE grants would be in addition to any grants now made by the federal government to state and local personnel agencies through the instrumentality of the Social Security Board, the Children's Bureau, the Office of Education, the United States Public Health Service, or other federal agency. In due course of time grants by such operating agencies for local activities strictly in the personnel field might be channeled through the federal Civil Service Commission, but such arrangements would require working out in detail in cooperation with the agencies immediately concerned and could not effectively be assumed by the Civil Service Commission at once, or en masse.

The unconditional grants would be certified for personnel operations, without restriction and without matching, partly on a showing of actually incurred expenditure for federal purposes, if any, and partly as a percentage of the total appropriation. They would be subject only to the audit of the Comptroller General of the United States. The conditional grants would be certified, within the limits of congressional appropriations, on the basis of plans proposed by state and local agencies and approved by the federal Civil Service Commission, normally including provision for matched funds, and subject to reports to the Commission and audit by the Comptroller General. These are more or less standard arrangements and correspond to those proposed by the carefully considered recommendations of the President's Advisory Committee on Education.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The amount of the conditional grant is difficult to suggest in the absence of experience. For the first year an experimental amount of \$500,000 might be ap-

Proper authority for participating in such a system of grants would be required in each state and locality. State legislation and the approval of the governor would be needed to furnish the necessary legal basis for fiscal cooperation between a state and the federal government, although much cooperation can be developed without recourse to either governor or legislature. Permissive enabling legislation, county or city ordinances, and the approval of the proper municipal or county authority would be needed for local-federal fiscal cooperation. Not all state or local governments would be prepared at the present time to enter a cooperative plan; others would be, and as experience was gained, the number would grow, so one would hope, to include most important jurisdictions.

#### OBJECTS IN VIEW

**A** PROGRAM of federal grants to state and local civil service commissions would help to meet several important needs, some immediate, some derivative. One immediate objective is to reimburse state and local governments for services rendered to the federal government. These services are both direct and indirect, and if we can predict future trends, they will steadily become more important.

The case may be illustrated by practice under the Social Security Board. By the terms of original act of 1935, various provisions were made to pay all or part of the administrative expenses of cooperating state agencies. Thus in the case of the old-age assistance program, 5 per cent of the federal appropriation is earmarked for state costs—amounting at the outset to \$2,487,500. The costs of administering the old-age benefit program are wholly federal. The administrative costs of managing state unemployment

appropriated, with authority to the U. S. Civil Service Commission to use at least \$250,000 for exploratory studies and initial plans without matching. The remainder would become available if matched; these figures would be reconsidered annually in the light of developing trends, and might be increased or diminished.

compensation laws are met by the state, but are wholly reimbursed by the federal government. In other cases, the administrative charges include a wide variety of costs, among others, personnel costs incurred as a result of the amendments of 1939.

The Social Security Board adopted its policy with respect to reimbursement of the state for personnel costs on November 17, 1939. As stated by the Board, this policy is to permit the State operating agency to provide funds to the civil-service agency for the unusual and clearly identifiable expenses incurred by it for the purpose of complying with the personnel standards under the Social Security Act as amended, but not to permit the State agencies to use Federal funds to assume part of the normal continuing expense of civil-service administration in the State. . . .

After initial conformity with the Board's standards, it would be expected that adequate provision would be made in the State civil-service appropriation to handle the regular costs of examinations for positions in the employment-security and public-assistance agencies as well as other State agencies. However, where examinations are held for positions peculiar to either or both of such social-security agencies and the services rendered by the civil-service agency are such that they can be considered special services to the State employment-security or public-assistance program, and where such extra expenses are identifiable, the Board policy permits their being met out of Federal funds.

No figures are yet available to show what payments have been made to state personnel agencies as a result of this policy. The Social Security Board, however, expects the initial costs to be substantially greater than the normal recurring costs; and it apparently also expects to meet only clearly identifiable expenses incurred by a state civil service commission for the security agencies.

**T**HERE are indirect costs, however, which are not clearly demonstrable to the cold eye of a government auditor, but which in good conscience the state and localities ought not to be expected to carry. The proposed unconditional percentage grant is designed in part to meet these costs.

We ought not, however, to look at federal benefits derived from a sound state and local civil service system merely from the working assumptions of an accountant or auditor.

The importance of widespread and effective state, county, and municipal merit systems to the soundness and strength of the federal merit system is hard to estimate in terms of dollars and cents, but is certainly very great. The federal merit system exists at the command and by the firm support of a substantial majority of Congress. It is well known, however, that among the small number of confirmed congressional enemies of the federal merit system (from both the majority and minority parties) most are elected from districts where the merit system is unknown, and the less hostile but more numerous congressional critics are likely to come from the same type of unprogressive district. A continuing demonstration *locally* of the soundness of competitive examinations, proper standards, position classification, and so on, would be one of the most powerful supports for the federal merit system. From such districts congressmen would be elected from either party who would understand the necessity for order, system, and merit in the public services everywhere. This kind of support is worth federal money, although it is a type of contribution too indirect to pass the scrutiny of an auditor for reimbursement.

In addition, the state and local public services are becoming more and more the training ground of federal personnel experts. The influx of superior talent to Washington has already caused some difficulty in state and local commissions and may cause more. On broad grounds of public policy it is desirable for federal personnel men (like federal administrators generally) to have some experience in state or local government. The needs of these governments ought not, however, to be sacrificed even to the urgent needs of the national departments. These incidental but genuine training and developmental services now performed by state and local agencies are again ones which the federal government might well assist by reasonable grants. When the day comes to take advantage of the value of state and local experience for present and future fed-

eral personnel directors, the obligation of the federal government will become even more clear.

WE MAY conclude, therefore, that one objective to be sought by federal grants to state and local commissions is to reimburse them both for demonstrable expenditures incurred for federal agencies, for indirect costs, and for the fiscally indeterminate but nevertheless highly valuable services of laying the effective basis in public opinion for the merit system and for early training of both technicians and supervisors for future federal service.

A second objective is to facilitate the extension of the merit system in such state and local jurisdictions as still remain without orderly plans for the recruitment and management of their employees. Despite notable gains since 1935, more than half the states still lack a general state-wide merit system; most of the counties are still operating on the basis of principles and practices common before the Civil War; and many cities have systems only for their police and fire departments. Technical progress in state and local personnel administration has been remarkably good in some instances, but in others slow and uncertain. The maintenance of good standards in some cities has proved a difficult task.

The lack of sound personnel systems at all levels of government is a national weakness, especially in the professional, scientific, and technical areas of employment. Not only in the face of a defense crisis, but also in view of our normal civil requirements, the country needs to rationalize and improve its professional and technical services without delay and by every proper means. The wartime risks *nationally* of incompetent police, fire, utility, medical and social services *locally* are vividly illustrated by the responsibilities heaped upon these services in British cities, and by the extraordinary success with which these branches of British local government (in many instances partially supported by national grants) have

performed their hazardous tasks.<sup>4</sup> As a nation, we ought not to tolerate longer the inefficiencies in local public administration which patronage and technical inadequacy alike necessarily involve. The situation is serious enough, in point of time and circumstance, to speed up the normal trend for the merit system by the added inducement of a federal grant to meet part of the bill. The cost of such national insurance is relatively negligible.

A third objective is to foster the improvement of practice and procedure in federal, state, and municipal personnel work alike. Each one has something to learn from the others. I do not advocate and would resist any effort to develop a uniform plan for all levels and types of government; but I am convinced that genuine possibilities exist for mutual assistance in the improvement of present practices which are not capitalized by existing facilities for the interchange of information, valuable as these are. The full task of coordinating such interchange in recruiting, examination, classification standards, career training, transfer between jurisdictions, pay scales and procedures, the salvaging of employees laid off for lack of work—to mention only some possibilities—is too great for private resources or for the relatively small sums which official agencies can spare from always inadequate budgets. I cite one example only, the formation of a central pool of validated tests and test materials and the servicing of tests for small jurisdictions at cost—a need long recognized but never realized on an adequate scale. A sound and progressive start was made five years ago by the Municipal Personnel Service of the Michigan Municipal League, and the Civil Service Assembly has recently laid the foundation for a similar program. These useful beginnings are ripe for rapid development.

Finally, among the broad objectives which might be sought by federal grants to

<sup>4</sup> See *British Cities at War*. American Municipal Association. (Public Administration Service, No. 76, 1941).

state and local civil service commissions we include the gradual coordination of federal, state, and local personnel operations and the formulation of long-range programs. State and local civil service agencies in several states have already worked out one form of useful coordination in holding joint examinations or simultaneous examinations for the same position. For a limited number of standard positions, this type of coordination could be developed on a national scale. I see no serious obstacles preventing the establishment of a national examination day participated in by federal, regional, state, county, library, district, and municipal personnel agencies (so far as each cared to join) at which typists and stenographers could demonstrate their skill and, by virtue of one test, earn places on the eligible registers of three or more jurisdictions for which they could show the necessary residence and other requirements.

Quite clearly also an ultimate objective which is not too distant for us to contemplate and plan for, and which personnel coordination would facilitate, is the formation of a public service career system which includes freedom to secure experience in all levels of government, as well as in the various branches and auxiliary services of a single government. The careers of a number of able career men in the present federal service encompass such a range of experience.<sup>5</sup>

However, no young man now contemplating the public service as a career could discover a plan for recruitment, training, and assignment which deliberately sought to use available resources for organizing a truly national, and a truly impressive career opportunity. This grand purpose will not of course be achieved merely by the proposed coordination of federal, state, and local per-

sonnel agencies, but in due course of time it would be powerfully affected by such a development.

**F**INALLY, looking ahead, we may note the present conflict between those who would bring public employees as a group within the old-age benefits of the Social Security Act and those who are stoutly defending the superior benefits which accrue from most existing public retirement schemes—where they are solvent. The advocates of the security benefits have a strong position in urging the necessity of a *nationally* organized minimum benefit for public employees (including teachers), who were excluded from the Social Security Act and large numbers of whom have no old-age protection at present. They are likely to win their point, at the possible cost of an eventual liquidation of present favorable public and school retirement plans, unless a suitable national coverage can be achieved by other means.

One such means is the organization of a national public employee retirement system which might serve as a form of holding corporation for present state and local systems, and which would offer a retirement plan with a number of standard options for voluntary adoption by state and local jurisdictions now without any retirement plan. There would presumably be central management of funds but local determination of variable standard benefits and of beneficiaries, subject to audit. The details need not concern us, but the issue is important, especially for the mass of present and prospective public employees—or from the other point of view, for the taxpayers. The advocates of the present separate system of public employee retirement benefits are now on the defensive; they could strengthen their forces by the coordination of their resources and by consideration of an acceptable alternative to the security program.

It is recognized that this problem ranges a considerable distance from the immediate objectives of a scheme of federal grants to

<sup>5</sup> Mr. John N. Edy, for example, has been employed as an engineer by a railroad company and by two state highway departments; as a city manager in four cities; and by the federal government in succession as assistant director of the Bureau of the Budget and assistant administrator of the Public Works Agency. His broad ranging experience, while not unique, is still exceptional.



local civil service commissions. I urge only that it is not irrelevant, and that it illustrates the nature of the problems which must be worked out in the manageable future and which can be worked out best by some form of joint action.

**B**EFORE proceeding to the second phase of the argument, I would like to summarize what I conceive to be the broad purposes of federal grants for personnel management. They are designed (1) to reimburse state and local governments for the direct and indirect costs of doing federal business; (2) to facilitate the extension of the merit system in state and local governments and thereby to buttress the public position of the federal merit system; (3) to improve personnel practices and procedures at all levels of government through more effective exchange of experience; and (4) to facilitate the coordination and mutual assistance of federal, state and local personnel agencies by establishing a mechanism through which various common problems could be more effectively explored. These problems I illustrated by referring to the coordination of examinations; the gradual evolution of a truly national public career service; and the study of a nationally coordinated public employee retirement plan. Other examples equally relevant and important could readily be brought forward.

#### JUSTIFICATION FOR EARLY ACTION

**W**E ARE now ready to consider briefly the reasons which suggest that the time is now ripe for practical consideration of some such program of federal grants to state and local personnel agencies, if not for the study of these specific problems. Twenty years ago the time was not ripe because the whole scheme of grants-in-aid was in an experimental phase, which has now passed. Ten years ago the time was not ripe, partly because too few states and cities had effective merit systems; partly because the states had not yet become fiscally dependent; partly because the possibility of national cooperation

had not developed in this field. The time may not be ripe yet, but signs multiply to suggest the opposite conclusion. Three considerations in particular lead to the view that discussion of this issue ought not to be further delayed.

*First*, the inevitable scale of federal expenditures in the foreseeable future is certain to force retrenchment and the most rigorous economy upon all other levels of government. The taxable resources of the American population will be strained to the utmost to meet presently authorized and contemplated defense costs and the long process of liquidation of national debt and payment of interest. The states and cities will be forced by organized taxpayer groups and by federal pressure alike to curtail in every direction. Where will the damage be heaviest? Industrial and governmental experience during the 1930 depression indicates that personnel management is in a very exposed position under such circumstances. In spite of marked progress during the last five years at all levels of government and on all fronts, public personnel management on anything like a mature and adequate scale has hardly arrived. It would be an easy target for a combined assault by an uneasy taxpaying public and the historic purveyors of appointments, who are quite ready to reassume (without overt cost) the task of filling public positions.

Since it is an inevitable *federal* fiscal pressure which forecasts this backward trend, it is a proper federal responsibility to see that mere fiscal pressure does not upset one of the most promising contemporary trends in public management. To allow the states and cities to retrogress (or to force them to deteriorate) is not only an indefensible attack upon the soundness of local government, but also, as already suggested, an assault upon the moral and psychological foundations on which the federal merit system itself rests. Those who lived through the curtailment of state and local functions in 1917-18 can readily bring to mind the enormous and unrelenting pressure upon local govern-

ments which a potential federal debt of 100 billion and current continuing expenditures of 8 to 10 billion are bound to exert. This inescapable pressure constitutes the first, and novel, reason for now recommending federal grants for state and local personnel management.

*Second*, the present emergency has emphasized the cost of federal drain upon qualified local and state personnel talent. The superior advantages of federal employment from many, although not all points of view, will not vanish with the emergency. The best qualified personnel experts are likely to turn to Washington unless equally attractive careers are open in the states and in the localities. This movement in the personnel field is largely a product of the last five years; it presents a new but a continuing reason for federal assistance to state and local governments to help them equalize their bargaining power in the competitive labor market. No responsible federal official would wish to widen the gap between the levels of competence among the federal members.

*Third*, since the evolution of the county agent, principally subsequent to 1920, and especially since the reforming legislation enacted since 1933, a new concept of federalism has been making rapid strides. This concept is based on the progressive coordination of administrative functions carried on jointly by federal, state, county, and municipal governments. It contradicts our historical federalism, which on the whole was based on a clean-cut separation of functions and sharply independent administration. It seems certain to be the typical pattern of American federalism in the next generation. It is now effective, to mention only some cases, in agricultural extension, highway construction and maintenance, regulation of land use, planning and conservation, the sale of securities, the regulation of interstate carriers, the management of employment exchanges, and the distribution of security benefits. It has already made itself effective in some aspects of public personnel management.

In my judgment the effective achievement of public policy is advanced by this type of federal arrangement and I consequently favor such reasonable steps as may still further improve and extend this emerging form of cooperative action. The enlargement of state and local resources for modern personnel management and the mutual assistance on a larger scale among personnel men at all levels of government seem especially conducive to facilitate this broader trend in our federal system.

**A**N INTERPRETATION of the present stage of fiscal and administrative trends leaves us, then, with three major considerations which seem to indicate the usefulness of federal grants for local personnel work: the certain immediate fiscal stringency of state and local governments and the consequent danger of serious losses in the scope and usefulness of personnel administration; the need for compensating the increasing federal drain on state and local personnel talent; and the desirability of facilitating an emerging and effective type of federalism.

These considerations will be weighed differently by different observers, and may be discounted by some. There are also other considerations which might suggest that such a plan as here proposed is both unnecessary and inexpedient. In conclusion, I will endeavor to review and comment briefly on some of these objections.

#### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

**T**HE position may be taken by some that state and local personnel agencies are already adequately financed and consequently need no federal grants. This view would be congenial either to those who were unfriendly to effective public administration, or who were unfamiliar with industrial or governmental personnel costs in progressive firms or jurisdictions. In a very small number of instances this position may be true, but not in the vast majority of cases.

The fact is that for at least twenty years there has been constant complaint concern-



ing the inadequacy of appropriations for personnel work. The excellent standard set, for example, by the T.V.A. is today approached by very few other public agencies. The work of most state, county, and municipal civil service commissions is hamstrung by lack of appropriations; they cannot do what they know needs to be done, and what they manage to do is at times on a low level of technical competence. A candid report on the condition of the classification plans of most state and city governments would disappoint anyone professionally informed; a survey of the examination standards would show both some extraordinary good work and much inferior and elementary testing. A representative of a state civil service commission in the middle west remarked recently, "About all we have been able to do lately has been done with federal money." My observation leads me, therefore, to conclude that financial help is needed, and I may add that it is not likely to be forthcoming elsewhere.

More serious, however, is the fear of federal dictation of local personnel policy, a concern which attends any conditional grant in any field. The genuineness of this objection is recognized, and to the extent that it represents an actuality I would share it. State and municipal personnel policy for state and municipal activities had best be settled by the states and cities, even though the policy is one which personnel authorities might deplore. Let us recall, however, that so far as public opinion polls and most public referenda are evidence, the great mass of citizens want the merit system and are tired of political patronage. The issue does not always get clearly put, and a state or local decision to cooperate with the federal government on a grant-in-aid basis would give a convenient occasion for the issue to be debated. The friends of the merit system could await the results with equanimity.

The plan here proposed can not be forced upon any community; it is an optional plan, requiring full official approval locally before going into effect. Once approved in

principle, the working basis for cooperation must be initiated locally, and would presumably reflect state or local ideas on personnel practice. Approval of such plans should be conditioned only on their recognition of the fundamentals of the merit system, and by law such approval should not extend to requiring any procedure or practice not essential to these fundamentals. If the community prefers the rule of local residence, or the elimination of formal educational standards, or the allowance of conclusive credits or no credits to veterans and their dependents, these preferences should prevail. Whether a state prefers a personnel director to a civil service commission or vice versa, or insists upon an open back door or closed, or requires a separate agency for the selection of municipal police and firemen or not—these are all issues which may properly be left to the state or locality to decide. The basis of cooperation need only be the mutual acceptance of the fundamentals of the merit system: open competitive examinations free from arbitrary barriers; employment in order of merit; permanent tenure during good behavior; freedom from partisan political obligations; and promotion on the basis of demonstrated competence.

**A**NOTHER objection might be that a federal grant to counties and cities for personnel work would undermine the constitutional power of the state over its subdivisions. The states can, of course, protect themselves against this eventuality by the nature of their organic enabling acts accepting federal grants. The experience of the last five years in comparable federal grants for public works, housing, and relief suggests that this problem is not a serious one.

Finally we are sure to hear from sincere defenders of the American commonwealth that this type of grant-in-aid is designed to reduce still farther the relative position of the state in the federal system, and to increase still more the dependency of the state and its subdivisions on Washington. To this complaint, my reply is that the states have

lost, are losing, and will continue to lose power and prestige so long as they maintain the archaic system of political management of their business which still prevails in over a majority of them and which occasionally threatens to return even among some of the more enlightened minority. The states can maintain themselves only by good works, not by faith in the symbolic formulas of sovereignty. They can perform good works only by competent and trustworthy administration, the achievement of which will be facilitated by the proposed type of cooperation. The friends of the states as organs of American government should welcome the promise of fiscal and technical help from the senior partner in the firm as one among many ways in which the states can be made more effective servants of the people.

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#### CONCLUSION

**I**NSTITUTIONS of government, like all human institutions, are ceaselessly in flux, changing from what they have been to what they are to become. Within limits we can form the shape of things to come, but we can be certain that they will change. We can agree upon objectives and we can deliberately work out these ends by appropriate means. The objectives here in view are the improvement of the public service of the American people, who are one although they live under many governmental roofs; and the strengthening of the federal system by facilitating the coordination of its parts and by strengthening the capacity of each member to carry its share of the common burden.

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# The Use of Performance Tests by the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission

LYMAN H. COZAD

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THE Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission, like most central public personnel agencies, has the dual responsibility of recruiting for the personnel needs of the departments under its jurisdiction, and, at the same time, satisfying candidates and appointing authorities that the methods used in selecting persons for vacancies are fair and valid. An effective and popular aid in measuring many of the motor and mechanical skills required of qualified workers in certain occupations has been an evaluation of an actual work sample in a job situation, or in other words, a performance test.

The use of performance tests has a somewhat greater applicability in the Los Angeles City Service than in many other jurisdictions, due largely to the fact that about half of the positions in the city service are either in the large municipally-owned water and electricity utility or in the Harbor Department. The functions of these two departments being what they are, there is a correspondingly higher proportion of skilled and semi-skilled job classifications in this jurisdiction than are found under most merit system agencies.

The occupational skills necessary for adequate performance in such journeyman classifications can be measured in a number of ways. One method is to analyze and break down these skills into component elements—perceptions, manual dexterities, and similar qualities—and then test for the possession of

these elements separately. Another method is to sample verbally the candidates' knowledges of the terminology, tools, and practices of the occupation. Where ranking of eligibles is not necessary, only critical amounts of experience and training may be required. One other method, where rank must be determined, is to evaluate as objectively as possible samples of the over-all performance of the complex operations which comprise the skill. From both the testing and the public relations standpoints, the experience of the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission seems to indicate that the last-named plan yields the best results.

Since there is no adequate statistical data available to serve as a basis for an evaluation of these performance tests by the reader, it will be all the more necessary to describe the methods used.<sup>1</sup> Appraisal can be made only after a consideration of the occupational fields in which performance tests are used, the content of the tests, the use made of experts, the rating methods and forms, the opportunities allowed for review of methods and results, and such statistical data as are available concerning the results obtained. After a consideration of these different aspects, the merit and applicability of the performance test as a whole can be better ascertained.

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<sup>1</sup> The methods and forms herein described were developed by the staff of the Examining Division in the two years since its installation, August, 1939. During most of this time the Director of Examinations was Joseph W. Hawthorne, now Assistant Chief, State Technical Advisory Service, Social Security Board. Therefore the author can take little credit for the methods described, although he must assume full responsibility for any conclusions or generalizations made.

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THE classes of positions for which performance tests are used by the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission may be grouped conveniently under the following headings:

1. Skilled craftsmen
2. Machine and equipment operators
3. Skilled office workers and technicians
4. Semi-skilled laborers and maintenance men
5. Designers and draftsmen

Included in this pragmatic classification are eighty-eight classes for which performance tests have been used as one of the selection tools in recent months. Although these tests are employed most frequently for the journeyman level, in a few cases they have constituted portions of examinations for the level of helper, and they were used for the foreman level in two cases.

At the present time about one-fourth of the examinations conducted by the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission involve performance tests. These tests have required the performance of varied work samples in the operation of machinery and equipment, and the display of skill in many of the common trades. At various times candidates have been required to make repairs to many kinds of equipment, make chemical analyses, take fingerprints, weld, caulk, bind books, cut patterns, forge metals, climb trees and high tension towers, do surveying, design engineering and landscape plans, sharpen tools, splice cables, clean rooms, transplant flowers, rescue "drowning" swimmers, and place dummy "accident victims" in ambulances and drive them to a hospital.

#### PERFORMANCE TESTS CONTENT

THE types of tests and ratings to be included in the total examination or test battery for a class of positions are determined after job analysis and research<sup>2</sup> re-

<sup>2</sup> The procedure is admirably outlined in greater detail by Donald J. Sublette in "The Preparation of Pencil and Paper Tests," *Public Personnel Review*, January, 1941, pp. 4-5.

garding qualifications needed for success in the occupation, including consultation with experts. Because of the economies and reliability of group testing and machine scoring, any ability for which valid paper and pencil tests exist or can be constructed is usually measured in that way. Performance tests, on the other hand, are generally used in an attempt to measure directly certain motor or mechanical skills. The aim in such tests is to measure the most representative of the occupational skills used in a particular class of positions, insofar as time and money are available.

The skills to be evaluated by performance tests are partially broken down into components so that ratings will be as objective and reliable as possible. However, the tasks required in the test are not broken down to such an extent that they resemble only remotely the actual work situation, for such refinements would be subject to ridicule, and might in many instances raise doubt in the candidate's mind as to the validity of the measure.

Where the duties of the job are such that a written test seems desirable as a measure of the knowledges required in the work, no attempt is made to test *all* aspects of the job in the work sample; only the important operations requiring qualifications not measurable by a paper and pencil test are included. Conversely, no attempt is made in the written examination to evaluate a skill that will be tested in a performance test.

In practice, the examining division of the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission uses statistical data compiled by the agency, or by other testing agencies, as well as the opinions of experts in the occupational fields, in making the decisions as to whether a required ability should be measured by a pencil and paper test or by a performance test. In cases of doubt, the fact that the performance test in a job situation is less likely to be influenced by extraneous factors than is the pencil and paper test often leads to the decision to use the work-sample method.

The weight assigned to the performance test has ranged from ten per cent to one hundred per cent of the total examination battery. The most common weights range from thirty per cent to fifty per cent of the total. These weights are based upon two principal considerations: (1) a consensus as to the relative importance of the elements presumably being measured by the proposed tests; and (2) the probable relative validity and reliability of the tests based upon statistical data available from similar tests. The weights are checked with experts in the occupational field, including persons in the operating departments who supervise workers in the class for which the examination is being constructed.

There are few classes in which the work is such that a performance test alone seems sufficient to rank candidates. Even in such cases, the public relations problems involved in omitting credit for length of experience *per se* are worthy of careful consideration. It may be added, however, that the candidates' reactions were not generally unfavorable in several examinations where no credit was given for training and experience. The types of tests and ratings to be included in the total battery, together with their relative weights, are listed in the published examination bulletin.

#### RATING OF PERFORMANCE TESTS

IN THE course of conducting the research and consultation required to determine the proper content of the performance test, the examiners have an opportunity to form opinions concerning the qualifications of various individuals in the vicinity who may be asked to serve as performance test raters. The greatest success has apparently come from the use of persons who have had considerable experience in supervising the type of work being rated.<sup>3</sup> The usual rating board

for performance tests consists of two or three persons with this type of experience.<sup>4</sup> For the most part the raters are not from the city service; they are selected from other public agencies or private concerns that employ personnel of the type for which the examination is being given. A particular supervisor will not usually be selected as a rater, however, if employees from his own firm are taking the examination. Working with this board at all times, but not rating, is a personnel technician from the staff.

Persons selected to serve as raters are supplied with job specifications and rating forms prior to the test and are instructed in rating techniques by the staff technician. The rater who comprehends most readily the problems of the test situation is given the assignment of instructing candidates as to the work to be performed. This is done so that questions raised by the candidates can be answered by someone who knows the terminology of the job.

A receptionist facilitates test administration by furnishing candidates with identification number and written instructions, if any are necessary. In instances where tests may be hazardous, a form is signed by the candidate, releasing the city from liability. A sample of this release form is shown in Figure 1. Although the legal force of this

FIGURE 1. LIABILITY RELEASE FORM USED IN PERFORMANCE TESTS

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Examination Title: Tree Surgeon      December 14, 1940  
Civil Service Commission  
City of Los Angeles

I hereby certify that I am not taking this examination at the request of any City Officer or employee. I understand that I am taking all the tests at my own volition; that the City of Los Angeles has no control over my actions, and that there is no employee-employer relationship between myself and the City of Los Angeles in connection with this examination.

I hereby release the City of Los Angeles, the Department of Parks, the Civil Service Department and each of their officers, agents, and employees from any liability for any injury to me that might result from any accident during the conduct of any test.

Signature (in ink)

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<sup>3</sup> Representatives of unions or professional societies are not excluded from consideration as raters, although it has seemed advisable not to use persons whose main occupation is securing members for such groups. Candidates frequently attribute to such people a bias which may not exist, but which cannot be readily disproved.

<sup>4</sup> Where a large number of candidates are required to perform several different tasks, more than one board is often provided, each board confining its attention to one or two tasks.



form has not been proved, its practical effect may be to lessen the likelihood of law suits based on accidental injuries.

In scheduling the performance tests care is taken to plan starting times so that each candidate can begin his test immediately upon arrival. The raters give the candidates their instructions orally or in writing, depending upon the means commonly used for giving assignments to workers in the occupational field being tested. A brief sample of such instructions, given to candidates for Electrical Instrument Repairman, appears in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2. SAMPLE OF PERFORMANCE TEST INSTRUCTIONS

*Problem 1.* You will be given a Westinghouse Switch Board type ammeter. You are to disassemble the instrument, unsolder the control spring and remove the top bridge.

Completely disassemble the coil and moving element of the meter. The meter field coil connections have been removed to facilitate this operation. After disassembling, the meter is to be reassembled. This requires that the control spring be soldered and the pointer balanced.

#### RATING METHODS AND FORMS

**M**ANY methods for rating performance have been used. The objective is to devise procedures which eliminate as much of the personal equation from the rating as possible. The more that the rating process becomes a task of observing and reporting overt behavior, the more objective it becomes.

The simplest form from the standpoint of preparation requires the rating of a total operation by the use of a five point scale, the five points being described by terms ranging from "Very unsatisfactory" to "Outstanding." The use of such a form assumes, of course, that the raters have been carefully instructed in the techniques of rating by the personnel technician and that they have a thorough understanding of the standards implied by these various gradations. However, this is often too broad an assumption upon which to base ratings.

Such simple rating forms, used early in the development of our performance tests,

have subsequently been improved, not only from the standpoint of reliability of ratings, but also to facilitate the task of explaining to candidates why they were rated as they were. The first step was to break down the complete operation into its main components. For example, in the performance test used for Cement Finisher, four ratings were made on each of the required tasks performed by every candidate. They were rated on "mixing," "speed of work," "finished work," and a "summary evaluation." But notwithstanding this refinement, the rating scales used for these ratings still relied on abstract definitions for gradation.

Rating forms can be refined one step further by a simple enumeration of the elements to be considered under each rating head. Thus in a rating form used for the lead wiping section of a performance test for Cable Splicer, the rater was guided by the following instructions:

*Preparing joint for wiping:* Consider shaving of sleeve, shaving of cable, beating in of sleeve, etc., also speed of work, technique.

*Wiping:* Consider judging temperature of metal, skill in handling metal, number of heats, speed.

*Methods of doing work:* Consider how well tools are handled, whether the work progresses smoothly, proper methods for each step, etc.

*Finished joint:* Consider appearance, shape, size; freedom from overwipes, underwipes, cracks, bubbles; etc.

The technician can secure a somewhat greater control over the use and weighting of the various elements to be considered in each rating if he lists them in check list form and requires the rater to indicate which statements were true of the candidate's performance. An example of this technique is shown in the lower portion of Figure 3.

In the use of this form, no specific computation of check marks is made. Their quantity serves only as a guide to the rater. Although in the use of this form the technician cannot control the weights subjectively assigned to the various elements by the raters, he can be guided in pre-weighting the elements in future tests by an analysis of the results. Despite the improvements over the earliest methods, however, this type of form still must be labeled "subjective."



FIGURE 3. PORTION OF RATING FORM USED IN ROLLER OPERATOR PERFORMANCE TEST

Street Rolling	
<i>Breaking Down:</i> Does the operator show skill in breaking down the hot stuff? Does he have ability in three-wheel rolling? Does he roll too close to, or too far from the curb? Does he recognize ridges, or high and low spots in the material. Does he know when the material is in the right condition for rolling? Does he work up to the crown properly?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
<i>Finish Rolling:</i> Does the operator show skill in finish rolling? Does he angle roll properly? Does he fail to over-lap, or over-lap too far? Does he roll too slowly or too fast for the condition of the materials? Does he start and stop too quickly?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Errors	
<input type="checkbox"/> Turned on hot stuff <input type="checkbox"/> Damaged curb or gutter <input type="checkbox"/> Rolled too far from curb <input type="checkbox"/> Did not over-lap <input type="checkbox"/> Over-lapped too far <input type="checkbox"/> Could not run straight line <input type="checkbox"/> Angle rolled poorly <input type="checkbox"/> Did not recognize high or low spots <input type="checkbox"/> No water on rolls <input type="checkbox"/> Rolled too fast <input type="checkbox"/> Rolled too slowly <input type="checkbox"/> Started too quickly on hot stuff <input type="checkbox"/> Stopped too quickly on hot stuff <input type="checkbox"/> Rolled crown before curb <input type="checkbox"/> Rolled material while too hot	

GREATER objectivity will probably result if the rater is not compelled to weight the various elements subjectively in rating a trait. Instead, he may be required to give a separate rating to each of the elements. This results in a form such as that used in the performance test for Structural Steel Shop Worker, shown in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4. RATING FORM USED IN STEEL SHOP WORKER PERFORMANCE TEST

Tool Selection	
Choosing right size drill	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Checking drill size	-----
Checking drill sharpness	-----
Laying Out	
Selection of proper tools	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Handling of tools selected	-----
Correct prick punching	-----
Familiarity with blueprints	-----
Correct procedure of marking	-----
Accuracy of markings	-----

Drilling and Tapping	
Setting drill in spindle	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Adjusting tap	-----
Stopping press clear of table	-----
Removal of burrs	-----
Sawing	
Use of correct clamping method	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Checking on blade setup	-----
Accuracy of cut made	-----
Punching	
Correctly starting machine	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Setting material in the machine	-----
Checking size of punch die	-----
Locating material under punch	-----
Shutting down machine	-----
Burning	
Correctly lighting by flint	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Checking nozzle or tip and adjusting valve	-----
Manipulation of torch	-----
Turning on the gas and oxygen	-----
Cleanliness of cut	-----

When this type of form is used, the weight to be assigned the various elements rated can be determined by the technical staff.

#### PRESENT RATING FORMS

CANDIDATES apparently place more confidence in a rating system in which the weights are assigned prior to the test than they do in one in which weighting is done subsequently. The type of form illustrated in Figure 4 can be improved, therefore, by using preassigned weights which are listed on the form. A better form, which uses preassigned weights and at the same time eliminates vague rating words,<sup>5</sup> is shown in Figure 5. This example was used in the LaFrance Rotary Gear section of the performance test for Engineer, Fire Department:

In this type of rating form, the need for decisions on the part of the raters as to definitions and weights of rating terms is practically eliminated. The rater is primarily a reporter of what the candidate does and does not do, which would seem to re-

<sup>5</sup> Although the type of form shown in Figure 4 reduced the latitude allowed subjective opinion in weighting the elements of a total rating, an obvious weakness of all the previous forms was the use of such general terms as "poor" and "good," for expressing ratings. Such terms convey varying meanings to different persons and to the same person at different times.

FIGURE 5. RATING FORM USED IN FIRE DEPARTMENT  
ENGINEER PERFORMANCE TEST

✓	ERRORS	DEMERITS
<i>Drafting at 120 lbs.</i>		
( )	Failing to check hand brake	3
( )	Failing to check suction connections	3
( )	Failing to check drains	5
( )	Failing to check for closed churn valve	10
( )	Failing to set T-handle screw on relief valve	10
( )	Failing to check discharge gates (line gate open, others closed)	10
( )	Wrong shifting of pump transmission	20
( )	Racing the motor	5
( )	Advancing throttle before shifting pump transmission	25
( )	Using "capacity" position for only one line	10
( )	Incorrectly putting relief valve in operation	20
( )	Failing to close churn valve	10
( )	Failing to check on pump-to-radiator cooling valve	5
( )	Improper adjusting of water cooling valve	4
( )	Stalling motor	10
<i>Shutting Down for Changing Pressure</i>		
( )	Failing to open churn valve	15
( )	Incorrectly increasing pressure by advancing throttle	5
( )	Throttling the motor while relief valve is in operation	10
<i>Resetting to 200 lbs. Pressure</i>		
( )	Failing to shut off relief valve	20
( )	Incorrectly advancing the throttle	5
( )	Failing to put pump transmission temporarily in neutral	10
( )	Incorrect shift, or wrong choice of position, for pump gear transmission	10
( )	Failing to close churn valve	15
<i>Shutting Down</i>		
( )	Failing to shut off relief valve	15
( )	Failing to open churn valve	15
( )	Incorrect manipulation of throttle	10
( )	Failing to put pump transmission in neutral	20
	Total possible points	300
	Total demerits	—
	Raw score	—
	Percentage score	—%

sult in more reliable ratings. This type of a rating form is now used in most of the performance tests conducted by this agency.

In all tests wherein it is possible, ratings are used which do not require a rater even to report behavior. For example, chemist candidates recorded for themselves the reading obtained in the use of an analytical balance, and instrument-men candidates recorded the amount of adjustment required

to correct a transit level. Testing machinery, used wherever possible, makes the rating of such work as welding much more accurate.

#### REVIEW OF EXAMINATION MATERIAL

WHEN an examination has been completed, the entire battery of tests used is reviewed with departmental supervisors to check the accuracy of written test items used, to eliminate any inappropriate material from any of the tests, and in general to secure approval of the examination procedure followed. After an eligible list has been tentatively established, candidates are allowed to review their results in the entire examination, including the ratings received in the performance tests. Protests of applicants concerning methods and content, as well as ratings, may be carried to the Civil Service Commission, which reviews the protests together with the analyses of the protests prepared by the examining division. Although ratings are seldom changed by the Commission, this review procedure requires that adequate justification be made of all steps in the examination process.

#### APPRAISAL OF RESULTS

THE Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission has, as yet, no validity coefficients for its performance tests. Although this absence of data concerning validity is unfortunate, the situation is one that probably prevails in most public personnel agencies. Perhaps, however, the absence of such coefficients is not so serious where the test is supposedly a sample or part of what would normally constitute a criterion of job success.<sup>6</sup> If the samples are carefully chosen, one may assume some correlation with the criterion of performance on the job, of which they are specimens. Again, the opinions of experts—upon which was based the decision that the samples were representative—constitute one method of validation frequently used in standardizing tests.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Charles A. Drake, "Aptitude Testing," *Personnel Journal*, March, 1940, pp. 340-45.

The uncorrected reliability coefficients which are available for a few tests compare favorably with similar coefficients for other selection tools which are used by personnel agencies. The coefficients of correlations between two raters which appear in Figure 6 were obtained from four examinations where it was ascertained that the ratings were independently made.

FIGURE 6. TABLE SHOWING CORRELATION BETWEEN TWO RATERS IN FOUR PERFORMANCE TESTS

Examination	N	r	P.E.
Caulker and Repairman*	141	.59	.04
Electrician	32	.97	.01
Telephone Operator	143	.98	.005
Traffic Zone Painter	23	.88	.03

\* The first of these examinations used less refined rating methods than those now being used.

It is interesting to examine the data appearing in Figure 7, showing some correlations between written and performance tests, where both were used. The coefficients are all expressed in terms of Pearson's formula.<sup>7</sup>

FIGURE 7. TABLE SHOWING COEFFICIENTS OF CORRELATION BETWEEN WRITTEN TESTS AND PERFORMANCE TESTS

	N	r	P.E.
<i>Skilled Craftsmen</i>		.39	
Cement Finisher	40	.48	.08
Platen Pressman	39	.40	.09
Linotype Operator	48	.45	.07
Plasterer	31	.17	.12
Compositor	99	.44	.05
Blacksmith	48	.43	.08
Acetylene and Electric Welder	81	.30	.07
Electrical Instrument Repairman	21	.57	.10
Caulker and Repairman	141	.68	.03
<i>Machine and Equipment Operators—Office</i>		.31	
Bookkeeping Machine Operator	38	.26	.09
Addressograph Operator	30	-.30	—
Telephone Operator	144	.07	.05
Key Punch Operator	69	.34	.07
Photocopying Machine Operator	23	.51	.11
<i>Machine and Equipment Operators—Field</i>		.32	
Instrument-man	98	.10	.07
Road Equipment Operator	45	.63	.07
Driver, Receiving Hospital	66	.10	.08
Auto Fireman	490	.17	.03
Motor Truck Driver	24	-.22	.15

<sup>7</sup> Those cases in which N is less than 30 were computed by the rank difference method, the results being subsequently converted.

#### *Skilled Office Workers and Technicians*

		.51	
Junior Stenographer	37	.42	.09
Fingerprint Clerk	115	.77	.03
Councilmanic Secretary	58	-.08	.09
Examining Assistant	174	.52	.10

#### *Semi-skilled Laborers and Maintenance Men*

		.32	
Gardener-Caretaker	32	.56	.07
Toolroom Keeper	20	.12	.15
Traffic Zone Painter	23	.32	.14
Cable Splicer	42	.18	.10
Blacksmith Helper	195	.39	.04

These coefficients of correlation are sufficiently low that, if some validity can be assumed for both tests, the combination of tests would, in most cases, probably have a higher validity than either the written test or performance test alone.

#### ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF PERFORMANCE TESTS

A TIME-HONORED argument against the use of performance tests is that they are more expensive to administer than other types of tests. Certainly this method is more expensive than the evaluation of education and experience made from data submitted by applicants. If the experience of this agency may be used as a basis for conclusions, the latter method appears to be perhaps the least valid of all selection tools. Interviews are nearly as expensive as performance tests, but they appear to measure such different aspects of a candidate's qualifications that substitution of one for the other is not feasible. If properly prepared, written examinations have appeared in our experience to be fully as expensive as performance tests, except where very large groups are involved.

The time required for the completion of an examination battery including both a performance test and a written test is somewhat greater than that required for certain other possible combinations of tests, but most department heads have been only too glad to wait the few extra days necessitated, so that they might obtain more carefully tested personnel.

Performance tests given out of doors may

be subject to some hazard of postponement because of inclement weather if no provision is or can be made for protecting the test area. There is some danger to expensive equipment which is used in a work sample test, but this danger can be reduced by using other indicators of proficiency earlier in the test to weed out the obviously unfit, and by placing a skilled operator at critical points to guard against any moves by the candidate which might endanger lives or property.

Supplies and equipment required for the performance test will frequently be furnished by the departments normally using such materials since these operating departments are desirous of securing properly qualified personnel. Raters frequently serve without compensation as a civic contribution, or because being members of this or certain other governmental jurisdictions, they are prevented by law from accepting compensation for such services.

**A**LL THINGS considered, the following advantages have apparently accrued from the use of performance tests by the Los Angeles Commission in the selection of employees for classes in which skills are required:

1. Department heads and supervisory employees have expressed greater satisfaction with the type of personnel certified from eligible lists.<sup>8</sup>

2. Candidates seem to express the opinion more frequently that they have taken a fair, valid, and logical examination. It is much more difficult for a candidate to say, "Maybe I can't pass your civil service test, but I can do the work perfectly satisfac-

torily, and have been doing so for many years."

3. Outside experts participating in the performance tests, those consulted about such tests, and departmental personnel hearing about such tests, usually praise the effort of the Civil Service Department to secure the best men. They frequently state that such tests are an improvement over previous examinations which did not include demonstrations of actual performance.

4. Much more favorable publicity is given to this type of examination. Newspaper reporters and photographers have displayed much more interest in this type of test than in other phases of the selection process. They have given more space, more intelligent reports, and more photographic coverage of performance tests than any other type of test. Full-page, well-illustrated news stories have been devoted to such tests in a number of instances.

5. The use of performance tests has made it more feasible to reduce or eliminate arbitrary minimum requirements, and yet assure that only qualified candidates will be placed on eligible lists. In the depression years, when there was an oversupply of candidates in most occupational fields, the emphasis was on obtaining the best from among many, and techniques then in vogue placed a premium on the ability to make a superior showing in every phase of the examination. Today the supply of qualified talent is diminishing steadily, and it becomes more and more important that no candidate who can perform a job satisfactorily be eliminated because he cannot demonstrate his ability in a pencil and paper test.<sup>9</sup>

6. The information given on the examination bulletin that a performance test is to constitute part of a civil service examination tends to discourage the unqualified, including the well-known "test takers," from applying for such an examination. In addition, the publicizing of the performance test tends to refute a common criticism to

<sup>8</sup>In a recent examination for Building Structural Engineer, it was decided to include in the battery the problem of checking a large blueprint of a building for unlawful or improper details—a sample of the work performed continuously in this class. This test changed the attitude of the administrators in the Building and Safety Department from one of skeptical tolerance of civil service methods to an attitude of gratitude and even sincere respect for the service performed. The Civil Service Department was, they stated, administering for them the type of examination which they themselves should have liked to give candidates if they had the time, ability and facilities needed.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Harold Levine, "Practical Civil Service Examinations," *Personnel Journal*, March, 1941, pp. 348-53.

the effect that a civil service examination is invariably a written test that is ill adapted to the task of selecting truly competent personnel.

7. The system of promotion by competitive promotional examinations, usually service wide, seems much more logical to employees and supervisors when such examinations embody tests of the skills and proficiencies required, which are usually developed to some extent in the lower ranks.

Although it is usually difficult to obtain validity coefficients for testing tools used in public personnel administration, due to the need for pre-test secrecy and the inaccuracies of coefficients computed on the basis of the top of resulting eligible lists, the practical experience of the Los Angeles City Civil Service Commission indicates that work-sample or performance tests are a valuable as well as a popular selection method for a public personnel testing program.

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# The Civil Service of the City of Buenos Aires

BRYCE WOOD

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THE countries of Latin America have traditionally secured their public employees by methods which are known in the United States as Jacksonian. Firing and hiring *en masse* is the usual procedure of new governments, whether elective or revolutionary, although the practical need for retaining certain technical elements of the preceding administration usually prevents the eviction of more than half the incumbents. Within the last seven years, however, the merit system has been adopted in Brazil by the national government, a law has been passed in Mexico granting the right of association to federal employees, and Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, has applied merit principles to its city officials. These are important steps in the development of more orderly and efficient personnel policies by the Latin American nations—steps which will be followed with especial interest by observers in the United States, since numbers of Latin American students are coming north to study our experience in public administration.

In Argentina, classified civil services and the merit system are at the beginning of their growth. For the national government, a general law of tenure and classification is still in the future, and only a few of the provinces have begun to deal with the problem of creating an efficient, permanent force of public servants.

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A beginning has been made, however, and an attack on the problem is under way.<sup>1</sup> Such well-known students as the late José Nicolás Matienzo,<sup>2</sup> and Rafael Bielsa<sup>3</sup> have pointed out deficiencies and urged reforms; certain provinces have established various types of regulations<sup>4</sup>; and in the field of city government, Buenos Aires, has had seven years' experience with a civil service regime. Buenos Aires is the third largest city in the Western Hemisphere, being outranked only by New York and Chicago. The busiest seaport in Latin America, greater Buenos Aires has a wholly European population of nearly four million inhabitants, and its governmental problems are quite similar to those of the larger cities of the United States.

## ORGANS OF PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION<sup>5</sup>

THE city of Buenos Aires is governed by a mayor, *Intendente Municipal*, and council, *Consejo Deliberante*. The mayor,

<sup>1</sup> See the references to renewed interest in a federal law in the column "Política Criolla," by J. Luque Lobos in the newspaper *Noticias Gráficas*, April 12 and 19, 1940.

<sup>2</sup> *La revolución de 6 de septiembre*, (Buenos Aires: Anaconda, 1931).

<sup>3</sup> *Derecho Administrativo*, (Buenos Aires: Lajouane, 1938).

<sup>4</sup> Civil service laws exist in the provinces of Santa Fé, (No. 2295 of December 24, 1932) Córdoba, and San Luis, and more or less complete executive regulations in Mendoza and San Juan. See Augusto Baró Graf, "La estabilidad en la función pública," *Seminario, de la Facultad de Ciencias Económicas, Comerciales y Políticas*, (Rosario) p. 216.

<sup>5</sup> The author wishes to express his appreciation for the assistance and friendly interest of the following persons: Dr. Pedro Aberastury, City Attorney; Señor Francisco Pérez Leirós, General Secretary of the Union of Municipal Employees; Señor Miguel A. Camino, Chief of the Office of Social Service; Señor Carlos D. Morillo, of the Personnel Office, and Dr. Carlos A. Adrogué, City Attorney.



who is no mere figurehead, is appointed by the President of the Republic, with the consent of the federal Senate, for a three year term. A modified form of proportional representation is used in electing the thirty councilmen, so that a third of them may be elected by a minority party or parties. The council may override the mayor's veto by a two-thirds vote.

The basic forms of the civil service of the federal capital are found in Ordinance 5262 of December 22, 1933,<sup>6</sup> which crowned a campaign begun by the presentation of a bill in 1919, and which had been pressed in the Council by members of the Socialist Party.

THE personnel system centers about the work of the twenty-six Advisory Boards, (*Juntos Asesoras*) one in each of the city's executive departments. These Boards, which are analogous to departmental civil service commissions, are composed of the Director of Social Service, the department head, the chief of the section whose employees are being replaced or rated, and two members named each year by the Mayor. These latter need not be city employees.<sup>7</sup>

The Boards make up and give examinations, classify employees for promotions and the filling of vacancies, inform the Mayor in cases where an employee might be liable to a disciplinary measure more serious than suspension for six days, and advise the Mayor in cases where reconsideration of disciplinary measures is asked.

<sup>6</sup>In referring to this ordinance the number CD (Decimal Classifier) 151.11 is used to indicate its place in the compilation of laws, ordinances and decrees which forms the *Digesto Municipal*. This collection was arranged in 1938 according to the Dewey decimal system, and a legal text of the city is always cited by its corresponding Dewey number, so as to permit ready location in the Digest. For a fuller explanation of the arrangement of the Digest, see Dr. Pedro Aberastury, "El Digesto Municipal de la Ciudad de Buenos Aires," *Boletín del Honorable Concejo Deliberante*, May, 1939, pp. 146-158.

<sup>7</sup>It is considered that there is only one Board for each department, even though the membership changes when the employees of the various sections are considered. Decisions in the Boards are taken by majority vote, with ties referred to the Mayor. On details of the Boards' organization, see Decree of April 30, 1934. CD 151.14.

The remaining important administrative organ is the Personnel Office (*Oficina de Personal*) which is attached to the Audit Division of the Department of Finance. This agency keeps complete records of all employees and serves as a clearing house and secretariat for the Advisory Boards.

From this division of functions, it is clear that the vital work of making the personnel system operate rests with the Advisory Boards. They act within the general scheme of classification, of course, but since they formulate, give, and grade the examinations, and also make up the merit rating reports which determine promotions, they are the key elements in the structure of the civil service. There is no single commission or office which conducts examinations, to which department heads must turn to fill a vacancy, since the Personnel Office is a registry bureau only. This diffusion of control contrasts with the trend in the United States toward centralizing the personnel function in one agency. Under the prevailing arrangement, each department works out its own policies, and as the civilian members of the Advisory Boards do not often interfere in the running of the departments, the officials retain much more freedom of action than if there existed a central, impersonal, personnel agency.

#### CLASSIFICATION OF PERSONNEL

IN OUR domestic personnel practice, position-classification is usually on the basis of the type of work done. In Buenos Aires, however, such functional classification is employed only to separate three broad divisions: Division A, officials and technicians (*empleados*); Division B, workers (*obreros*); and Division C, apprentices and others. These general groups are broken up, not into classes of engineers, nurses, truck drivers, or accountants, but into various non-descriptive categories, each with its own salary range. Division A, for example, includes eight categories: director; principal official; first, second, and third officials; and first, second, and third auxiliary. The cate-

gories are each divided into several grades, and to each grade is attached a salary. There are five grades, or salary groups, in each category of auxiliaries, four in the two lower categories of officials, and three in each remaining category. The other two divisions are similarly organized. Salaries in the first division range from 165 pesos<sup>8</sup> per month in grade 1 (third auxiliary), to 1500 pesos per month in grade 32 (director). The grades are numbered consecutively throughout the division.

Under this system, an employee's classification would be, for example, "Division B, 2nd Official, Grade 14"; or "Division A, Principal Official, Grade 28." From this description his salary would be known, but not the kind of work he was doing; however, anyone in Division A would almost certainly be a white collar worker.

As listed in the budget, most of the positions are given some descriptive name, such as "nurse," "cook," "accountant," or "inspector," but there is nowhere a classification by these descriptions. In addition, there are many posts which carry no functional title whatever. It appears from the budget, for example, that Buenos Aires employs only two stenographers. The rest of the *taquígrafos* are lumped in the various undifferentiated groups of Auxiliaries that appear frequently in the pages of the budget.

**T**HE question immediately arises: How are types of work related to salaries? Here again, as with examinations, department heads have great latitude, and within certain practical limits they may assign positions to grades or categories as they like. Theoretically, a man holding an assistant bookkeeper's job might be classified as Principal Official, Grade 29, receiving a monthly salary of 1200 pesos; other men performing the same work might conceivably be classified as 2nd Auxiliaries, Grade 6, making only 210 pesos. Such an enormous disparity would be impossible to maintain in prac-

tice, however, and although the "equal pay for equal work" rule may not be strictly followed, a reasonable degree of uniformity will probably be maintained.

An example of the system at work may be found in the salary scales for drivers of the city's cars and trucks. There are approximately 600 employees performing function of *chauffeur*, and these are distributed among five categories of the division of laborers and one of the divisions of apprentices. The salary range for *chauffeurs* is thus from 165 pesos to a possible 350 pesos a month. This distribution is not brought out by the system of classification, however, and can be discovered only by going through the budget and singling out all positions to which the title *chauffeur* is given.

If salaries are not attached to particular jobs, what is the criterion for assigning a man to a given category? There appear to be no statutory rules answering this question. In practice each department makes its own decisions, and these will probably be based, with varying emphasis, upon the nature of the job, seniority, and personal or political influences. The scope allowed this last factor, even though limited by the two others, may raise doubts as to the impartiality and efficiency of this form of classification. When the system is new, however, and until adequate experience is gained, a certain degree of flexibility in the allocation of categories is not undesirable.

#### RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

**I**N THOSE governmental units in which it is installed in the United States, the merit system implies that the most capable of those tested shall be employed, and examinations for most positions are difficult enough so that aptitudes may be fairly accurately graded. A different policy is followed in Buenos Aires, where, in general, fairly simple tests are designed to eliminate the least capable. Beyond that, freedom of appointment is permitted from among those found to be at least qualified.

<sup>8</sup> The peso is currently valued at about 24 cents.

There are two general methods of recruitment: by the so-called *concurso*, and by competitive examination. The *concurso* is used mainly to fill vacancies requiring professional or technical training, such as in the fields of law or engineering, but it is apparently also used occasionally to fill non-technical, administrative posts. If an Advisory Board wishes to employ a lawyer, for example, it is at liberty to choose either to give a written or oral examination to all candidates (*concurso de examen*), or to select its man, without examination, by a comparison of the credentials of the applicants (*concurso de antecedentes*). This latter method, in the case of a lawyer, requires the presentation to the Advisory Board of documents qualifying him to practice law. Candidates are also asked to present any information whatever about their past which might support their application. Among the useful "antecedents" are considered: previous experience, public or private; books or articles published; any special degrees held, and so forth. The choice is then made by the Advisory Board without further requirements.

When there is a vacancy to be filled by *concurso*, an announcement is published in the Municipal Bulletin, and at least five days must elapse before the entry lists are closed. The candidates present their qualifications to the Personnel Office which, after seeing that all requirements are fulfilled,<sup>9</sup> gives permission to take the examination, or forwards the credentials to the Advisory Board. There is no selection whatever at this stage.

After examining the antecedents, and, if it so decides, giving examinations, the

Board is required to send its ranking of the candidates to the Mayor within 48 hours after giving examinations, or within 7 days after receiving from the Personnel Office the candidates' dossiers of qualifications. There are no statutory criteria which the Board must follow in deciding between the use of a *concurso* or an examination.

AS PROVIDED in the Decree of April 30, 1934, which organizes the recruitment system, the entry into all positions in the administrative, technical-professional, and specialized laborer careers (except those filled by *concurso*) may be made only after an oral and written examination of competence. The examination is to be suited to the position to be filled, and to be the same for all those who apply at a given time.

Examinations are given by the Boards at regular intervals as determined by their presidents. Aspirants to technical positions not filled by *concurso*, and to jobs as specialized workers are examined by the Board for the particular division in which they seek employment. There is no central organization for the giving of all examinations, as is the usual practice in the United States, and some duplication of effort therefore results. However, a degree of uniformity has been provided by the requirement<sup>10</sup> that all examinations for entrance into the administrative career be given by the Board of the Office of Secretary to the Mayor (Secretaría); those for the accountancy career must be given by the Board of the Audit Division; and those for the police career by the Boards of the Inspection or Traffic Divisions.

The Advisory Boards give each aspirant a final grade, based not only on the result of the examination, but also on the medical reports and on the information they may obtain from previous employers. However, the members of the Boards are prohibited from receiving or giving consideration to recommendations of any kind, and any ap-

<sup>9</sup> The preliminary requirements which must be fulfilled to the satisfaction of the Personnel Office, are of a formal character. Besides the basic diploma or certificate required for every *concurso*, each aspirant must offer proof of his age, a police certificate of domicile and good conduct, a "clean bill of health" from the city's medical officers, and (for aliens) evidence of two years' residence in Argentina. In addition to these are the legal requirements that all applicants must be able to read and write, and must be between the ages of 17 and 50 for officials, 17 and 45 for laborers, and 14 and 16 for apprentices.

<sup>10</sup> Decree of April 30, 1934, CD 151.14.

plicant who presents a recommendation to a Board is automatically disqualified for the examination in question.<sup>11</sup> The final grade scale is as follows: 0 and 1, "bad"; 2 and 3, "fair"; 4, "average" (normal); 5 and 6, "good"; 7 and 8, "very good"; 9, "excellent." Any candidate receiving a grade of 4 or above is considered approved. This approbation gives an equal eligibility for appointment to all who received a passing grade; there is no certification procedure involving the "rule of one" or the "rule of three." Furthermore, no eligible list or reservoir of candidates is formed under this plan. Those approved remain so only until another examination is held, and there is no necessary relation between the number of examinations and the number of approved but unappointed candidates.

THE nature of the examinations, in addition to questions of qualifications and procedure, provides some points of interest. In general, the examinations appear to be fairly easy. They are largely eliminative rather than highly selective, and the short-answer type, now so common in the United States, has not yet come into widespread use. Illustrative of the character of the tests is the program of Examinations for the Administrative Career. It consists of four groups of subjects: (a) reading, writing, penmanship; (b) typewriting, mimeographing and office practice; (c) arithmetic; (d) general knowledge, (Argentine history, civics, municipal administration). Each of the three sections of the last group contains between ten and twenty specific topics. At the time of the examinations those to be written on are chosen by lot.<sup>12</sup>

A typical examination paper includes four sheets of foolscap. On the top of each

of the first three is a general topic such as: "History of the Argentine Revolution for Independence"; "Government by Boards, Triumvirates and Directories"; or "General Idea of the National Constitution and of the Administration of the Country." The candidate writes his essays directly below the questions. The last sheet contains seven elementary problems in arithmetic. The arithmetic questions are chosen from some two thousand problems, and are very simple in character.

This is the type of examination required of the bulk of the city employees. Those skilled workers or professional men who are chosen by the *concurso de antecedentes* are selected on a similar principle—that of satisfactory minimum qualifications. Since, as noted above, the Mayor may appoint anyone who has passed the examinations, or presented acceptable credentials, his latitude of discretion is large, and there is no assurance that merit and appointment will be related. However, when highly specialized positions are to be filled, a difficult, selective examination (*concurso de examen*) will frequently be ordered by a Board, and the order of grades in these cases is usually of importance in making the appointment.

The nature of the *concurso* assumes that the educational system has operated as a fairly rigid prior selective process, since diplomas of various types are usually required, but approbation for other posts in the administrative and lower careers is within the reach of the great majority of those in Buenos Aires who have no more than a primary school education. Eligibility for appointment is generally easy to obtain. The appointment itself then usually depends upon the relative political influence of those approved, since the general rule is that the Mayor is free to make appointments from a group of eligible candidates.

A high entrance threshold for civil service personnel was not foremost in the minds of those who carried on the struggle for the present system. The movement toward a classified service, which culminated in 1933,

<sup>11</sup> Decree of April 30, 1934, CD 151.14, Art. 11.; Art. 6, CD 151.12. It should be noted that there have been complaints that these rules are largely disregarded.

<sup>12</sup> A globe containing numbered wooden marbles (*bolillas*) is mounted between two uprights so that it may be turned and the marbles mixed. A valve in the globe then is opened and from the two marbles allowed to fall out the candidate may choose the number of the topic he prefers to discuss.



was animated principally by the desire to put an end to the political dismissal of public officials. Tenure implied classification, but competitive examinations were not in the main current of thought behind the reform movement. Protection of the employees, rather than efficiency of the service, was the main motive power, although an interest in efficiency was by no means absent.<sup>13</sup> Now that the main battle has been won with the establishment of classification and tenure, it is likely that progress will be made toward still greater efficiency in terms of a more discriminating recruitment policy.

#### SERVICE RATINGS AND PROMOTION

THERE are two avenues whereby an employee's status may be improved: promotion, or the action of moving to a higher grade within the same category; and *ascenso*, or the action of passing from one category to another. Both types of progress are based upon a combination of merit and seniority.

Vacancies occur not only in a category (i.e. salary), but also in a function. The situation thus differs from that in the Brazilian National Civil Service, where the vacancy is in a category and not in the position vacated.<sup>14</sup> In Brazil the promotion system applies to a salary only and an official may keep one position through any number of promotions. In Buenos Aires an *ascenso* necessarily means a change of function as well as of salary, although the former is discretionary with each department and does not appear in the general classification scheme. Promotion, on the other hand, without being automatic, is similar to a system of annual increments in that the same position may be retained when a higher grade is reached in the same category.

<sup>13</sup> See *Debates del Consejo Deliberante*, Dec. 22, 1933, p. 4118 for statement by Comptroller dell'Oro Maini that the City's Executive hoped that the proposed reform would provide not only the satisfaction of a general desire for justice, "but also an increase of efficiency by the employees in the performance of their duties."

<sup>14</sup> See Fritz Morstein Marx and Bryce Wood, "The Brazilian Civil Service," *Inter-American Quarterly*, October, 1940.

In contrast to promotions, which are made on the basis of merit ratings only, the *ascenso* procedure requires also a general review of each candidate's capacity and the Board's judgment as to his aptitude for the position in question. When there occurs a vacancy which must be filled by *ascenso*, the fact is published in the *Boletín Municipal*, and within three days all the Advisory Boards must send to the Personnel Office the names of eligible employees in their departments who are capable of filling the higher post. Within ten days the merit rating, together with a report upon each candidate's fitness is sent to the Mayor.

The merit rating is conducted semi-annually by the Advisory Boards. The rating consists of three grades, one for each of the three general qualities of competence, application, and character. On the individual rating sheet, each of these concepts is explained at length. "Application" for example, is interpreted as "the manner in which the employee carries on his work," and it includes such characteristics as assiduity, punctuality, interest, enthusiasm, co-operation, and others. It is, however, the general quality only which is measured by the grade, and each of the three may vary independently on a scale that ranges from 0 to 9. (A grade of 4 is "average.")

The grading instructions make the procedure less complicated by stating that the employees who perform their ordinary work satisfactorily should receive grade 4; and that higher ratings should be given only to those with capacity to fill more important positions. Grades over 5 are to be awarded only in exceptional cases. In practice, therefore, the grades mean bad, satisfactory or good, and there is thus, as in the United States, a recession from an attempt at the minute measurement of qualities which cannot be defined with mathematical precision. Comments upon the grades may be made by the section chief or by the Advisory Board in the spaces provided in the rating sheet, but only one grade for each of the three general divisions is permitted. Each



grade is completely independent of the other two, and they cannot be added together for purposes of comparison. Each employee is informed of his ratings, and if these are below grade 4 in any division for three consecutive rating periods, or five alternate periods, he automatically enters a probation period for six months just as though he had newly entered the city service.

**SENIORITY** in the service, and in the position occupied by each aspirant is also considered in the reports of the Boards. Finally, the Boards are also expected to express their judgment about the candidates from all other departments. As a general rule, preference in an *ascenso* is given to employees in the highest grade of the next category below. The Boards do not have the only initiative in the procedure of *ascensos*, since employees who consider themselves entitled to advancement may present their candidatures to their respective Boards. They are not assured a recommendation, or even a presentation to the Mayor, but the provision may be useful in moderating persecution complexes and in avoiding the omission of worthy names. It may be noted in this connection that the Boards are "official" in character, and quite without any employee representation. There are occasional complaints of favoritism against the Boards, and the Union of City Employees (*Unión de los Obreros de la Municipalidad, or UOM*) has made repeated but so far unavailing requests for the inclusion in each Board of an employee representative.

At the time of making the ratings for the second half-year, the Advisory Boards prepare lists of proposed promotions. These include all deserving employees in every grade, and the names are placed in order of merit, "taking into account seniority in the same grade."<sup>15</sup> There are minimum requirements for length of service in a grade, but seniority will not of itself assure promotion.

<sup>15</sup> Decree of April 30, 1934, CD 151.13, Art. 17. Articles 13 to 16, inclusive, of this Decree provide for *ascensos*.

It is given weight when the merit ratings are otherwise equal. The proposals of the various Boards are presented to the Mayor by the Personnel Office after being brought together in a single table for easy comparison and selection. There are no legal limitations upon the Mayor's discretion in promoting officials and there is no necessary minimum of promotions.

#### RIGHTS AND DUTIES

**ON THE** whole, it may be said that the city service is able to compete fairly successfully with commercial establishments in attracting employees. As is indicated later on, the provisions for pensions, retirement and sick leave are liberal, and there exists general satisfaction with them. The principal point on which criticism might focus is that salaries for professional men are somewhat too low. The minimum wage paid by the city (except for part time, or to apprentices) is 165 pesos a month, which compares very favorably with the average wages for common laborers and service personnel in industries in Buenos Aires.<sup>16</sup> This relatively high minimum wage does not, however, carry on through other portions of the salary scale. There are, for example, engineers, architects and lawyers in the 375 to 500 peso range. While these salaries may be improved by promotion, they are probably not high enough to attract and hold better than average talent, except for persons in whom a desire to serve the community overrides a purely pecuniary interest.

The employees of Buenos Aires are explicitly granted tenure by a law which provides that an official or laborer cannot be dismissed or retired except for good cause, in accord with the existing regulations, and without a previous report to the Mayor by one of the Advisory Boards, in cases where dismissal is being considered for the good of the service. Although there are no official turnover figures published, of 21,000

<sup>16</sup> *Investigaciones Sociales*, statistical studies directed by Dr. José Figuerola, (Buenos Aires, Departamento Nacional del Trabajo, 1940), Table 11, p. 28.

present employees there are probably fewer than 100 discharged each year, and these for good and sufficient reasons. Before 1933 the number of political discharges occasionally reached 2,000 in a year.

Dismissals are now made largely for major infractions of rules, or for repeated petty derelictions. Less drastic disciplinary measures include warning, suspension up to 6 days, and suspension for from 6 days to a month. A warning and a minor suspension may be applied by a department head, with an appeal, in the second case, through the Advisory Board to the Mayor. The minor penalties are invoked for the usual offences—insubordination, tardiness, discourtesy, and so on—but no general code has been laid down and the department heads make their own regulations.<sup>17</sup>

**T**HE provisions for vacations, sick leave, retirement, and pensions are liberal. From the pension fund formed from discounts upon their salaries, the employees may borrow to build houses or to get a month's salary ahead of time.<sup>18</sup> Sick leave with full pay is allowed for a maximum of three months a year.

Retirement is allowed after 30 years of service if the employee is 50 years of age. His retirement pay is computed on the basis of the average salary during the last five years of service, as follows:<sup>19</sup>

Salaries up to 300 pesos.....	95%
Salaries between 300 and 500 pesos.....	85%
Salaries between 500 and 700 pesos.....	75%
Salaries between 700 and 1000 pesos.....	65%
Salaries between 1000 and 1500 pesos.....	55%

In addition there are a number of special benefits, such as that which grants to each employee with ten years of service an extra

5 pesos a month for each of his children of less than 15 years of age, or that which offers special arrangements for obtaining life insurance.<sup>20</sup> A particularly interesting type of employee-assistance is the medical aid offered by the Direction of Social Service. This organization provides employees and their families with medical and dental service, which includes nearly everything up to major operations. In general, a service such as extraction of teeth is free, and very low rates are charged for other types of work.

#### EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION

**T**HE ordinances and decrees are silent on the questions of employee organizations and strikes, nor is there any plan for group presentation of complaints by employees. There exists in fact, however, a means by which dissatisfaction may be expressed in organized form, namely the Union of City Employees. The UOM, which is affiliated with the General Confederation of Labor, was founded in 1916 and now includes some 9000 employees, or nearly half the total personnel. It possesses a constitution authorized by the national government, and is a strong organization, offering to its members perhaps the most complete range of benefits provided by any similar group. For example, it provides a medical service similar to that of the city's Direction of Social Service; it runs a large vacation camp in the hills of Córdoba; it possesses a sports field in Buenos Aires; it lends money to members; and in general it serves them as a lodge, a club and a cooperative society. The Union took a leading part in the campaign for tenure and classification for city employees, and in fact acts as a kind of substitute for a municipal Whitley Council.

<sup>17</sup> See for example, Ordinance of August 5, 1895, Article 16 CD 154.1, in which lack of courtesy or respect may be punished by suspension "for a certain period."

<sup>18</sup> Ordinance 5936, of August 14, 1934, CD 158.11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Art. 35. An employee with 30 years' service may retire before reaching 50, at a discount of 4% of the retirement sum for each year short of 50, (Art. 37). There are also special provisions for retirement due to permanent disability and in cases where, for reasons of economy or other cause not involving the employee's culpability, an employee with more than 20 years' service is discharged. Arts. 40, 41, 42, 43.

<sup>20</sup> The establishment of this life insurance plan replaced the former allowance of one month's wages for mourning, which was given to the family of a deceased employee whose earnings were less than 300 pesos a month. The insurance will be obligatory for all employees who have contracted debts with the Municipal Social Assistance Fund (*Caja Municipal de Prefisión Social*), and optional for all other permanent city employees. Premiums are at the rate of 1.80 pesos per thousand with a thousand peso minimum.

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# Service Rating Plans

ALBERT H. ARONSON

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A SERVICE rating plan may be defined as a method of securing and recording, systematically and periodically, supervisory opinion of employee performance. It is, therefore, a formalizing, through analysis and summarization, of the continuing process of employee evaluation that is involved in supervision.

## OBJECTIVES OF A RATING PLAN

THE objectives of employee evaluation plans, as distinguished from the achievements of any specific plan, will receive general endorsement. By providing a periodic record as to employee performance, a service rating plan should objectify the application of personnel policies with respect to promotions, salary advancements, furloughs, separations, and other personnel actions.

Further, it should improve supervision by systematically directing supervisory attention to specific factors of employee performance and by encouraging the development of work standards. Service rating is not a protection against poor supervision, but it may force supervisors to learn more about work factors and the performance of employees or else admit to themselves the inadequacy of their reports.

A service rating plan should also improve employee performance by facilitating and focussing discussion of job aspects needing attention, by encouraging self-evaluation and interest in self-improvement, and by providing work incentives through recognition of superior performance. Employee morale should be improved by the mutual

understanding growing out of constructive supervision in the application of ratings. Employee confidence in administration should be fostered by a system that is felt to be some protection against hasty and ill-founded personnel actions. It must not, however, be blandly assumed that the installation of a service rating system necessarily improves morale. The dangers to morale in installation and administration will be discussed hereafter.

Other secondary objectives of a service rating plan may be to indicate training needs for the organization as well as for the individual, and to direct attention to areas for improvement in position-classification, recruitment, and placement practices.

## INHERENT DIFFICULTIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

THE process of evaluation, since it involves human judgment, cannot be completely freed from human error. However, the process can be analyzed and improved: job standards and guides to judgment can be developed and applied; attention can be directed to important aspects of performance instead of irrelevant details; and common rating errors can be called to the attention of supervisors and minimized. With administrative support and supervisory interest, sincere efforts to eliminate bias can be made.

Widespread dissatisfaction with service rating plans is not attributable merely to the inherent difficulties of the problems and the deficiencies of rating forms and procedures. It is usually related to the administration of the plan and the fact that the rating process brings to light weaknesses of supervision. A

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service rating plan can be no better than the quality of its administration; the quality of its administration can be no better than the quality of supervision in the agency. Thus, if the rating officer does not have criteria of effective performance, if he is ignorant of the quality of the work of the rated employee in any important particular, if he is biased, or if he is afraid to offend employees by criticizing their deficiencies, his ratings will have little value. Too much faith, therefore, cannot be put on the results of service ratings, but clearly the faith to be placed depends not upon an attitude toward service ratings in general, but upon the administration of a specific plan in a specific organization.

The problems of employee evaluation cannot be avoided by not having a service rating plan. Administrative decisions concerning personnel actions must be made, and accordingly, administrative judgments will be made. The difficulties of employee evaluation are not diminished by refusing to recognize that the process is going on. Hence, a service rating plan is not a furbelow but a stark necessity. Uncontrolled subjectivity in evaluation may cover up abuses in administration and the rationalization, if not the deliberate play, of amicisim, prejudice, and political bias. The dangers of these is minimized but not eliminated by attempts in the service rating system to achieve objectivity. While any claim that a system is objective is, of course, nonsense, that does not mean that all systems of obtaining and recording judgments are equally susceptible to subjective influences.

#### ALTERNATIVES TO SERVICE RATINGS

**W**E must not expect too much of a service rating plan. A healthy skepticism requires that we look at the limitations and at the alternatives. What bases are there for evaluation of performance other than supervisory observation and judgment? Certain types of work lend themselves to the utilization of production records showing quantity and quality of output. Attendance

records are another objective measure of a phase of employee behavior. Certainly there should be the fullest use of production records. As standards of performance are developed in specific fields of work, the extent and usefulness of such records should increase. To the extent that this is done, the unfair burden placed on the service rating plan will be lifted and it will take its rightful place as a limited but useful tool in administration.

Periodic examinations of employees in mechanical skills, such as stenography and typewriting, and in knowledges of administrative procedures and of technical fields, may also be used in the appraisal of employees in relation to their jobs. These tests do not, of course, indicate whether the performance of the employee is on a par with his knowledge and skill, but practical tests will indicate abilities rather than mere capacities and will provide a valuable supplement to, if not a substitute for, supervisory opinion. Such tests may be said to have a negative diagnostic value. Like entrance tests, they may indicate lack of necessary knowledges or skills, but the employees who pass the examinations will not necessarily be satisfactory workers. However, tests of job knowledge may be used to indicate employee progress or retrogression in relation to certain job requirements.

#### TYPES OF RATING SYSTEMS

**T**HE number of service rating plans is so large, their variety so great, and cross-fertilization so free, that classification is difficult. However, although certain systems will not lend themselves to this process, the majority of the plans that are in use in the public service may be put roughly in one of three categories, which may be designated as trait-rating systems, substantiating-evidence reports, and analytic check lists. Within these broad categories there may be wide differences as to the type of system, the process of its development, the refinement of its procedures, and the basis of its scoring methods.

No attempt can be made in this article to



mention all or even the principal systems except by way of illustration,<sup>1</sup> nor can there be an adequate description of the systems that are mentioned. Brief references will naturally omit significant factors and hence be unsatisfactory to the proponents of the various system. The study of the forms and instructions, as well as reference to descriptive materials, is necessary, of course, to understanding and appraising any system.

A basic dilemma that has given rise to different approaches is the polarity in the rating process between specific and reliably reported observations and over-all but unreliable judgments. One may paraphrase the old saw and say that with one approach we get more and more objective reports about the less and less significant until we have perfectly reliable ratings about nothing, while with the other approach, we get a more and more comprehensive rating that is more and more subjective until we have a completely comprehensive rating that is totally unreliable. The systems that obtain reliable reports on minute bits of observable conduct may run into the difficulty that the sum of the observations is not equal to the total performance on the job. On the other hand, the systems that depart from the concrete may get a well-rounded but undependable picture of supervisory opinion.

#### TRAIT RATING SYSTEMS

THE largest group of service rating plans, both in the public service and in industry, would fall into what we have called "trait-rating" systems. These are systems in which performance is analyzed under a number—usually a relatively small number—of headings which may be called job traits. The rater is asked for an evaluation of the employee's characteristics in terms of the degree to which he possesses those traits. For example, in the system in use in the federal

civil service, the rater is asked to rate productiveness on a scale of 1 to 10 after checking as strong or weak points three or four factors of productiveness, such as: "Promptness in completing assignments; speed." and "Application of time, interest, and application to duties; industry."

A widely used device in trait rating plans is the graphic rating scale, on which traits are to be rated by placing a check mark at an appropriate place on a line indicating the various degrees of possession of, or proficiency in, the trait. The use of descriptive phrases to supplement the chart is a common device and may bring the system close to the check list plans. For example, in the plan of the Pennsylvania Bureau of Employment and Unemployment Compensation, ten traits are used in the form for technical and professional workers, one of which is described on the rating scale as follows:<sup>2</sup>

Consider the systematic arrangement of records and other materials for ready access:

*Is always orderly and systematic. Records are always readily available.*

*Brings order and system to all work. Records usually available.*

*Is systematic in most phases of his work.*

*Lacks method and order in work. Records are available after much searching.*

*Lacks orderliness in all his work. Seldom can find anything.*

To avoid the difficulties of untrammelled judgment rating, these systems have been refined in several ways. Definitions of traits have been developed and descriptive phrases have been used as rating guides, couched, as far as possible, in terms of observable qualities of job behavior. Another improvement has been the development of specific rating forms for different types of jobs, containing rating elements peculiar to the jobs, and using definitions and descriptive phrases specifically applicable to them.

<sup>2</sup> On the rating form itself, the various degrees of each trait are presented as intervals along a horizontal scale. The supervisor places a check-mark at the interval which, in his opinion, best describes the degree of the trait possessed by the employee.

<sup>1</sup> There are hundreds of different rating plans or adaptations of plans that are sufficiently formalized to be called service rating systems. A bibliography on the subject prepared by the State Technical Advisory Service of the Social Security Board contains over 400 references to published materials.



## SUBSTANTIATING-EVIDENCE REPORTS

ANOTHER type of system has been termed the substantiating-evidence report. The New York City<sup>3</sup> and Tennessee Valley Authority systems are examples of this approach. In this type of system the majority of the employees are rated as "satisfactory," "standard," or "average" in the absence of substantiating evidence. Such evidence is called for as the basis of rating employees in the superior and inferior groups.

These plans attempt to avoid the difficulty of fine distinctions in evaluating traits and to require verifiable facts rather than judgments to substantiate ratings. The supervisory official is asked not to rate employees, but to transmit his reports to examiners who evaluate the evidence and determine credits or demerits to be allowed. However, the supervisor makes the determination, for which no substantiating evidence is required, as to which employees fall into the standard group. Since this type of system may not provide adequate analytic evaluations as a basis of discussions with employees to improve performance, it may be supplemented by specialized ratings for supervisory purposes, which are not translated into credits or demerits for the employee's record.

This type of system is designed to minimize subjectivity by focusing the supervisor's attention on the facts of job performance which can be stated in concrete terms, instead of asking him to estimate the employee's service in terms of qualities possessed in varying degrees. In considering whether the subjective element has been largely banished, one must examine the judgmental process whereby the supervisor places an employee in the standard group or elects to submit substantiating evidence of his superior or inferior performance. One must also look at the supervisor's task in

selecting and reporting evidence as to unusual performance, and the examiner's task in evaluating the evidence. Variation in the ability of supervisors to express themselves, and in the adequacy of supporting records which they may keep currently, will also enter into the results of such systems. These systems have, however, the value of simplicity of administration from the point of view of the supervisor and the advantage of eliminating problems arising from attempts at fine distinctions among the large body of employees whose performance is not outstanding.

## ANALYTIC CHECK-LISTS

PLANS in the third group also are designed to avoid evaluation by the rater, utilizing a check list of observable qualities of behavior as a device for recording supervisory opinion.

The Probst,<sup>4</sup> probably the best known service rating system, is of this type. It discards the idea of requiring supervisory officials to make quantitative judgments as to various traits in subordinates and asks the supervisor to report by check marks on a series of descriptive phrases relating to job behavior which he has presumably actually observed. Thus, a supervisor may be asked to check items such as the following to indicate the presence or absence of the behavior or his lack of knowledge on the point: "Talks to much," "learns new work slowly," "learns new work easily." The evaluation of employee service is made, not by the supervisor, but by the use of a scoring system devised with the indirect use of the normal distribution curve. The supervisor does not know the specific rating which is to result from his report. This scoring system has been one of the principal bases of criticisms of the system because of the alleged difficulty in understanding it and because it apparently operates to give more weight to favorable than to unfavorable judgments of

<sup>3</sup> S. H. Ordway, Jr. and J. C. Laffan, "Approaches to the Measurement of and Reward of Effective Work of Individual Government Employees," *National Municipal Review* (Supplement), October 1935, 24., pp. 557-59.

<sup>4</sup> See J. B. Probst, "Service Ratings," Bureau of Public Personnel Administration, Technical Bulletin No. 4, 1931.

the supervisor by the inclusion of a larger number of unfavorable items.

Several later service ratings systems have utilized the contributions of the Probst system—that is, the elimination of a fine evaluative process and the substitution of a more easily handled statement of the presence or absence of behavior, and the provision of a long list of descriptions of work behavior rather than generalized comments on personality traits.

Psychophysically designed scales such as those of Beyle and Kingsley,<sup>5</sup> and Richardson and Kuder,<sup>6</sup> may be placed in the analytic check-list group. They utilize the same type of specific job-behavior items, but arrive at the scale, both in the selection of items and in their weighting through the techniques of attitude measurement developed by Thurstone.<sup>7</sup> The United States Railroad Retirement Board has experimented with a rating plan using this technique.<sup>8</sup>

**A** LESS widely used type of rating system is the narrative or essay form of evaluation. It has the advantage of permitting the supervisor to paint in his own words the strengths and weaknesses of the employee. It is revealing as to the attitude of the supervisor toward the employee but is open to major objections as a rating device. No two supervisors are likely to make their appraisals in the same terms, and important job characteristics may be ignored. It is impossible to score the evaluation in such a way as to arrive at comparable ratings of the service of employees. The essay form, however, might be used to supplement other rating devices.

The use of the controlled answer rather

than the narrative form of service rating parallels the use of the objective type rather than the essay form of test question. It is to be noted that in both instances objectivity in the scoring procedure does not assure validity.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF OCCUPATIONAL FORMS AND STANDARDS

**A** PROMISING development in service rating plans of various kinds which has been mentioned is the construction of separate forms for different jobs. It is interesting to note that the California State Personnel Board in successive revisions of its system has increased from 11 to 45 the number of separate forms adapted to separate occupational groups.<sup>9</sup>

The construction of occupational forms is not a simple process. A personnel officer cannot devise such forms in a swivel chair. There must be realistic analysis of the jobs, showing differences in duties and responsibilities and how these are reflected in different requirements of knowledges, skills, abilities, and attitudes. The cooperation of supervisors and workers is essential in this analysis and the translation of the analysis into measures of job success.

In obtaining employee and supervisor cooperation, it is important that they contribute within the areas of their knowledge. For example, they might discuss and define work factors and weights to be applied to items related to specific types of work with which they are familiar. If the thinking of an untrained group dominates in the development of a service rating plan mistakes may be made which could be avoided by drawing upon the experience of those familiar with service rating problems.

The development of standards of performance is related to the problems of the development of production records, but even in areas where records of quality and quantity of output are not feasible, it is

<sup>5</sup> H. C. Beyle and J. D. Kingsley, "A New Employee-Evaluation Scale," Syracuse, New York: 1935. (mimeographed)

<sup>6</sup> M. W. Richardson and G. F. Kuder, "Making a Rating Scale that Measures," *Personnel Journal*, 1934, 12., pp. 36-43.

<sup>7</sup> L. L. Thurstone and E. J. Chave, "Measurement of Attitude," (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1929).

<sup>8</sup> H. S. Belinsky, "Developing Effective Service Ratings," *Personnel Administration*, Vol. 3 No. 3, November, 1940.

<sup>9</sup> Louis J. Kroeger, "California's Report of Performance Plan," *Personnel Administration*, Vol. 3, No. 8, April, 1941.

sometimes possible for those intimately familiar with the work to define criteria of effectiveness and to reach common understandings as to terms and as to earmarks of significant variations in job behavior.

#### IMPORTANCE OF ADMINISTRATION OF SYSTEM

THE administration of the service rating system is more important than the particular system used.<sup>10</sup> This is not to say that all plans are equally good, but merely that interested, trained supervisors who know the work of their subordinates will do a good job with any system. On the other hand, the best system will fail if there is lack of administrative interest, supervisory application and employee cooperation. No service rating system is proof against bad faith, ignorance, or slovenliness on the part of the supervisors. However, a good rating system should make it easier for the administrator to discover these deficiencies on the part of supervisors.

The vital importance of the administration of the system makes the training of raters a matter of primary concern. Supervisory participation in devising or adapting the system is, of course, an excellent training device and a means of developing interest and support. The training of raters should include discussion of job standards, the definition of terms, and attention to the mechanics of rating. Sufficient time for rating must be allowed so that it becomes a summation of prior observation, not a hasty disposition of irksome clerical work. After the rating process, there is an opportunity for discussion and analysis of the ratings that should be utilized for further training.

There must be appreciation by raters of the objectives of the system, the purposes and limitations of the ratings, and their relations to other phases of personnel administration. Raters must be given instructions in the rating procedures, involving

such questions as to who is to rate and for what periods, what forms are to be used, what reviews are to be made, what discussions are to take place, and to what extent employees are to be informed of their individual ratings. In addition to the discussion of rating standards and the definition of terms, there should be discussion of common errors in rating, such as the halo tendency, and the tendency to rate employees as "average" because of lack of knowledge of their work.

Employee understanding of the rating system is, of course, highly essential. This should involve conferences with employees as well as the distribution of forms and written instructions. Employee organizations should be consulted and the formation of employee committees or study groups encouraged. Publications of employee associations as well as house organs may be used to explain the system. Discussions of their ratings with individual employees with a view to improving their performance should also involve such explanation of the system as may be necessary to assure their understanding of its operation.

#### APPEALS BY EMPLOYEES

ANY system of administrative judgments should provide for employee appeals. Even if the cases of abuse of administrative discretion are rare, the existence of appeals machinery will have a healthy effect. In the field of service ratings there are dangers that unless the appeals procedure is carefully safeguarded, it may result in a group of unbiased but also uninformed persons substituting their guess as to employee performance for the judgment of the supervisor who has observed the performance over the rating period. Appeals machinery and administration must avoid two other dangers: (1) being ineffectual and unused because of complicated, cumbersome procedure; and (2) placing the supervisors on trial and thereby establishing incentives for them arbitrarily to rate subordinates too high to avoid such trial. The burden of proof must

<sup>10</sup> See J. H. Pockrass, "Common Fallacies in Employee Ratings," *Personnel Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 7, January, 1940.

not be placed on the supervisor in such a way that, since judgments cannot be conclusively proved to be correct, they would be presumed to be incorrect.

#### WHO SHOULD RATE WHOM?

**T**HE question as to who should be rated by whom must be faced in any service rating plan. It is customary to omit rating the top executives. This is partly because of their objection to being rated, and partly because in single jobs involving unique responsibilities it is difficult to establish job standards and to make comparisons among persons occupying similar positions. Then too, the amount of administrative courage necessary to make an unfavorable judgment of a top executive is rare.

It is generally accepted that the larger the number of independent judgments, the more reliable the rating. The influence of personal bias may be minimized by increasing the number of raters. Some systems, such as that developed by Barteau,<sup>11</sup> call for a number of independent judgments. The difficulty in this is that there are few jobs where several supervisors have an opportunity to acquire first-hand information on which to base a valid judgment as to employee performance. The administrative principle of unity of command tends to result in this situation in well run organizations. Hence, most systems provide for a single rating by the immediate supervisor with review by those higher in the administrative hierarchy. This may mean that the person with the final decision knows least about the job performance of the individual.

The evaluation by fellow employees in the same type of work brings to the rating process their intimate knowledge of the job and their practical criteria of superior performance, but may involve personal relationships less relevant to administration than the supervisor-subordinate relationships in which the supervisor has responsibility for work results.

Self-rating is open to many objections if it is recorded and given weight in administrative decisions, but it may be very valuable as a developmental device. Job introspection may help the employee to appreciate performance standards and to accept fair ratings of a supervisor.

Ratings of supervisors by their subordinates should be valuable in determining whether they are regarded as fair, and should evoke cooperation, loyalty, and other attitudes favorable to superior performance. It is questionable whether subordinates are able to evaluate properly the technical performance of their superiors in fields in which the superiors are selected for greater competence. In any event, there is difficulty in getting frank responses without anonymity and in anonymity there is danger that the poorer or maladjusted employees may vent their spleen against a strong supervisor. Such ratings, therefore, should be used with caution, but may make contributions comparable to those of attitude studies.

#### INSTALLING A SERVICE RATING SYSTEM

**N**O SERVICE rating system should be installed until the need for it is felt within the organization. Top administrative officials and employees must recognize both the objectives and the alternatives. They must realize not only the values of a sound service rating plan, but also the numerous obstacles to be overcome before success can be achieved.

If a rating system is oversold there is bound to be an unfavorable reaction as the subjectivity of the process becomes apparent, as cases of undue strictness or laxness come to light, as weak employees have their weaknesses brought to their attention if not generally exposed. In some instances the morale may actually be adversely affected. In other instances existing employee dissatisfaction may merely be focussed instead of smoldering. Unfair ratings are not a cause of unfairness; they are an expression of it. Employees may sense and resent this un-

<sup>11</sup> Charles E. Barteau, "A New Conception in Personnel Rating," *Personnel*, Vol. 13, No. 1, August, 1936.



fairness and the opportunity under a rating plan for them to challenge its expression may be healthy.

In the installation of a service rating system it seems wise to proceed from the simpler to the more refined plan as the need for improvement is recognized. Plans placed in operation are often hastily condemned because of the amount of time their administration takes. The time spent is well spent if it results in sound ratings, improved supervision and more effective performance. However, the realization of this ordinarily will not come without direct experience.

The type of system that is best for an organization at any one time will depend not only upon the size and character of the organization and upon its readiness to expend time and effort but also upon the uses to which the ratings are to be put. If ratings are used only for certain limited personnel actions, such as determining basic eligibility for semi-automatic salary advancements, it is not necessary that the system be as refined as when the ratings are to have major weight in promotions or lay-offs.

If, as is desirable, emphasis is to be placed upon the educational value of the rating process to the rater and the employee and upon the consequent improvement of supervision and performance, detailed analysis of performance in all aspects will be needed. This does not mean that there need be a

great many fine distinctions in the scores. It means that the rating process may not be neglected even though the results in terms of final scores may be telescoped to ignore slight differences.

The weight to be assigned service ratings in personnel actions should depend upon the validity of the system and upon administrative and employee confidence in the system. The deadening effect on employee incentive of seniority as the sole determinant in personnel actions will readily be recognized, yet seniority is clearly more equitable than invalid ratings. In promotions, undue recognition of capacity, to the exclusion of demonstrated performance in a related job, may also have an adverse effect on employee morale. Hence a proper evaluation of performance is crucial in a dynamic organization.

The seeking of improved methods of employee evaluation should involve research and not merely progress on the basis of trial and error. The application of scientific techniques to the rating process is imperative in view of the fact that there are no easy answers to the problems of human relationships. It is obvious that we have no perfect service rating plan. However, realistic recognition of the fallibility of the rating process need not lead to its abandonment nor to indifferent acceptance of the poorest process instead of aspiration to the best.

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# Coordination of Personnel Functions in a State Public Welfare Department

WILLIAM G. COLEMAN AND H. F. HALLAM

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**T**HE amendment to the federal Social Security Act enacted by Congress in 1939, making mandatory the adoption of a merit system of personnel administration in state agencies receiving federal grants-in-aid for old age assistance, aid to dependent children, maternal and child services, and employment security programs, constituted a tremendous impetus to the extension of the merit system at the state level. For a great many state governmental services this represented the first departure from a so-called patronage or spoils system. In those states already operating under a civil service law, the effect of the amendment was to strengthen or modify to varying degrees existing central personnel controls. A few states operating their welfare services on a state-supervised-but-locally-administered basis found it necessary to extend the merit system to county welfare employees.

From a long range point of view, the extension of the merit principle to these state services constitutes an important milestone in the history of civil service reform in the United States. At the same time, however, many serious problems of an administrative and technical nature have been and will be encountered. To overlook or neglect these problems is to risk retarding progress, not only in public welfare administration, but in public personnel administration as well.

Some of the most important and compli-

cated questions that are encountered while installing Social Security Board merit systems in state public welfare departments are concerned with a proper and practicable separation and coordination of authority and responsibility for personnel administration between the newly created merit system agency and the public welfare agency itself. Which personnel functions belong solely to the operating agency or solely to the merit system agency? Which functions constitute a joint responsibility between the two administrative authorities? Within the welfare agency, what is the proper sphere of activity, with respect to personnel, of the Personnel Officer, the Administrator or administrative board, and the Director of Public Assistance or State Case Work Supervisor? It is for the purpose of exploring and discussing these questions that this article has been prepared. The authors present here certain ideas and practices which have been gleaned from experience in installing a merit system in the welfare department of one of the larger midwestern states. Many of the problems and difficulties encountered in this state are shared in common by state welfare departments and merit system councils elsewhere, and it is hoped that this discussion will prove to be interesting and thought provoking to others in the public welfare and personnel fields.

## LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

**W**HEN Congress adopted the merit system amendment to the Social Security Act, it became necessary for states not al-

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ready operating under a civil service law either to enact enabling legislation, or draft administrative rules and regulations providing for a merit system in the public welfare department that would meet the minimum personnel standards promulgated by the Social Security Board. Although not required to do so by law, many welfare agencies have elected to include under the merit system such supplementary services as commodity distribution, W.P.A. certification and referral, and C.C.C. enrollment.

The Missouri statute establishing the welfare department contained the following section:<sup>1</sup>

The State Commission shall also have power and it shall be its duty . . . , (2) to cooperate with the United States Government in matters of mutual concern pertaining to any duties wherein the State Commission is acting as a state agency, including the adoption of such methods of administration as are found by the United States Government to be necessary for the efficient operation of state plans hereunder.

Since it was felt that this section constituted sufficient legislative authority, Missouri chose to adopt comprehensive administrative regulations establishing a framework for the installation and operation of a merit plan of personnel administration for the state public welfare department. The plan adopted, like those of many other states, follows rather closely a suggested draft plan submitted to all the states by the Social Security Board. This plan provides for the appointment of a Merit System Council, similar in functions to a civil service commission, consisting of three public-spirited, non-political citizens who are interested in the furtherance of the merit principle in government. The Council members are appointed for overlapping terms by joint action of the two participating agencies, the Welfare Department and the State Unemployment Compensation Commission.

Responsibility for detailed administration of the plan is vested in the Merit System Supervisor, appointed jointly by the

two agencies upon recommendation of the Council. It is the duty of the Council and the Supervisor to establish general policies for the administration of examinations, and the hearing of appeals thereon; to review classification and pay plans, and to advise with the agency in their adoption or revision; to promote public understanding of the policies and practices of civil service; to develop and put into effect procedures for the administration of the merit system as they relate to the preparation, administration and scoring of examinations, preparation and maintenance of registers of eligibles, and certification of eligibles to the agency for appointment.

It should be noted at this point that the only phase of personnel administration in which the Council possesses final authority is in the hearing of appeals from results of examinations. In contrast, actions of the merit system agency concerning matters of classification, pay, and appeals from dismissal, are only recommendatory in nature. It should be pointed out, however, that the influence exercised by the Council and Supervisor will probably exceed the specific authority delegated in the rules and regulations, provided that the recommendatory and review functions are carried out with discretion and intelligence. Since the Council is an impartial body, serving without pay and interested only in fair, equitable and just treatment for all, the operating agency would naturally hesitate to reject many Council recommendations. Such a course would ultimately result in serious impairment of the relations between the two authorities and, if such actions became generally known throughout the state, would place the operating agency in an undesirable light in the eyes of the public.

The scope of the Council's practical authority will also depend to a considerable degree on the extent to which it fosters mutual respect and cooperation between the agency and operating officials. If the agency views its function as one of servicing and implementing operations, as well as polic-

<sup>1</sup> State of Missouri, *Revised Statutes*, 1939, Section 9399.

ing and controlling, and if it recognizes that a merit system is not an end in itself, but only a means to obtain operating efficiency and economy, it will have progressed far in gaining the confidence and respect of those whom it is to serve.

All of these factors should be constantly borne in mind throughout the discussion of specific functions which follows.

#### CLASSIFICATION AND PAY PLANS

**R**ESPONSIBILITY for the establishment of the classification plan rests primarily with the operating agency. The Personnel Officer is responsible for assisting in the preparation of the plan, in its continuing administration, and in proposing amendments when necessary. The Director of Public Assistance, or the supervisory field staff, make recommendations to the Personnel Officer for any necessary amendments to minimum qualifications for positions of a professional social work nature.

As the work of the department changes, the work of individuals will also change, requiring the establishment of new classes of positions and the abolition of others. To keep the classification plan current, job analyses are conducted by the Personnel Officer at periodic intervals and job description questionnaires are executed by each employee. Each employee is required to reply to such questionnaires by presenting a specific and concrete picture of his position, listing each task performed, and submitting estimates of the approximate percentage of time devoted to each task. The accuracy of the completed questionnaire is certified by the employee's supervisor, amplifying comments being inserted by the supervisor when necessary. Upon completion, the questionnaires are reviewed by the Personnel Officer to determine whether each position is properly classified. Information obtained by questionnaires is supplemented by a desk audit where necessary. Recommendations for changes in classification and allocation are made by the Personnel Officer when deemed necessary.

The merit system agency reviews and approves or disapproves all amendments to the classification plan. Such approval or disapproval, however, constitutes a recommendation to the operating agency, the latter being free either to accept or reject such recommendations. The Merit System Supervisor, upon request, also renders technical assistance and advice in connection with classification functions.

From a long range point of view, classification probably constitutes the most important of the borderline responsibilities belonging to the Merit System Council and Supervisor. Certainly no other personnel function, if improperly applied, can so seriously undermine the morale and confidence of the individual employee in the merit system. Although qualifying examinations may present temporary problems, and a demotion or dismissal here and there may cause a brief flurry of unrest, the entire staff is continually conscious of job titles and salaries every day in the year. The classification of positions and the allocation of positions to classes directly determines the salary of each employee and affects the line of promotional opportunity. Unless the principle of equal pay for equal work prevails rather thoroughly throughout the agency, the staff will be inclined to accept the idea of a merit system with considerable skepticism. Notwithstanding the technical perfection with which remaining personnel functions are executed, an unsound or inequitable classification plan, or one which is shot through with compromises to internal agency pressures and politics, is a most unstable foundation for the personnel program.

**T**HE fact that final authority for personnel classification and allocation rests with the welfare department in states operating under Social Security Board merit systems gives rise to difficult problems and situations not encountered in other civil service jurisdictions. In these latter areas, classification determinations are made by an

independent authority outside the operating agency and are likely to be more impartial and less influenced by internal departmental pressures. On the other hand, if the operating department has final authority for classification and allocation, it is often extremely difficult if not impossible to allocate properly or correct through reclassification certain positions which protrude like "sore thumbs" from the regular organizational pattern. This is especially true if such action will result in a decrease in the salary of the incumbent.

In the situation existing in their particular state the authors have found it to be strategically desirable, though not procedurally correct under the rules, for the merit system agency to assume added responsibility and initiative in classification, particularly with respect to periodic and corrective reclassifications. The welfare department has been willing to take the necessary action upon the basis of insistent recommendations of the Merit System Supervisor, with the merit system office bearing the brunt of pressures opposed to the action. By this method it has been possible to remedy several very difficult personnel situations.

Although such a course, based upon an unofficial working agreement between the two authorities has been successful, the authors are of the opinion that it would be more desirable for the personnel rules to endow the Merit System Supervisor and Council specifically with final authority in matters of classification and allocation, with the right of appeal to the Council for any employee dissatisfied with the allocation or classification of his position.

**T**HE operating agency is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a pay plan. Specifically, this responsibility devolves upon the Personnel Officer; it is his duty to maintain and administer the plan. It is the further duty of the Personnel Officer to see that all salary rates set forth on the payroll are in conformity with the salary

schedules embodied in the plan. In the establishment of the pay plan, salary ranges for similar classes of positions in other state departments and in private industry are considered. Most amendments to the pay plan are initiated by the Personnel Officer.

In submitting an amendment to the pay plan that affects professional positions, the Personnel Officer relies to a considerable degree upon recommendations of the Director of Public Assistance and other members of the professional supervisory staff. All amendments to the pay plan are submitted to the merit system agency for approval or suggestions.

#### RECRUITMENT AND EXAMINATIONS

**A**LL announcements and publicity concerning examinations are in the name of the merit system agency.<sup>2</sup> However, interested persons are advised in such publicity that they may secure application blanks from local offices of the welfare department or from local employment security offices. Although recruitment is primarily the responsibility of the merit system agency, the field staff of the welfare department may render valuable service by encouraging interested and qualified persons in the various areas to file application for examinations. Knowledge gained by field staff members concerning personnel resources in their districts becomes a valuable supplement to the recruitment activities of the personnel agency. The operating agency can also use to advantage its various connections with schools of social work in order to encourage students and graduates of these schools to file applications.

Responsibility for the preparation and conduct of written tests naturally rests solely with the merit system agency. Extreme care is exercised in the selection of items for the tests, subject matter consultants of recognized

<sup>2</sup>It is believed to be desirable that the operating agency refrain from participating in the publicizing of examinations, in order that the merit system agency may retain a desirable degree of individuality in the eyes of the public.



standing in the various fields covered by the tests being employed to review all items prior to their inclusion in the examination. Such consultants are chosen from within the state. Their employment serves two valuable purposes: first, the inclusion of technically faulty items, or items inapplicable to state situations, is largely prevented; secondly, the consultants add considerable prestige to the test, particularly if it is subjected to criticism by applicants subsequent to its administration. Such critics are advised that leading authorities in the particular subject matter field have reviewed the test and deemed it fully appropriate for the class of position for which it was given.

It has been found to be desirable for the Merit System Supervisor to discuss each examination with the department heads of the operating agency immediately after it is given, but before the papers are scored. Through such discussion the merit system agency is given the benefit of constructive criticism and valuable suggestions from the operating officials. Such criticism and suggestions may concern either the inclusion or exclusion of specific items, or may take the form of a suggested change in general content and emphasis for subsequent examinations.<sup>3</sup>

**T**HE examination process as a whole may be improved considerably if the Personnel Officer or other officials of the operating agency report continuously to the central personnel agency with regard to the quality of persons appointed from various eligible registers. If a particular examination yields a register of very high quality,

<sup>3</sup> This technique should be employed with care lest the merit system agency become too much under the influence of specific individuals or philosophies insofar as examination content is concerned. On the other hand, if pursued advisedly and carefully, it constitutes an ideal means for bettering administrative relationships between the two authorities; it makes the merit system less of a cold, untouchable mystery to the welfare officials and usually resulting in less criticism on the part of the staff concerning the substance of examinations in which they participate. When such a policy is applied, criticism should be voiced openly and opportunity should be afforded the merit system agency to present its side of the picture in answering such criticism.

as demonstrated by favorable reports from the welfare department, then examinations of like scope and general content might very well be repeated in the future for the same class or classes of positions. On the other hand, if a register yields a very poor quality of personnel, the examination might well be scrutinized for inherent weakness. It should be recognized, however, that other factors, such as salary scales, minimum qualifications, and residence requirements, may seriously restrict the quality of persons finally eligible for appointment.

Responsibility for scoring written examinations and for the conduct of interviews are functions that belong entirely to the merit system agency. In the rating of education and experience, however, considerable aid and guidance may be secured, particularly with reference to professional positions, through consultation with the professional employees of the operating staff concerning quantitative and qualitative rating standards which are established. As in the case of the written tests, such discussion tends to strengthen working relationships between the two authorities.

#### CERTIFICATION AND APPOINTMENT

**I**T IS the duty of the Personnel Officer, when advised of a vacancy, or the addition or creation of a new position by the appointing authority, to request the certification of an appropriate number of eligibles. Before such request is made, however, it is the duty of the Personnel Officer to determine whether need for filling the vacancy actually exists. For example, if one or more new positions of visitor or case worker are requested in a county office, the Personnel Officer considers such factors as the case load of the present workers in that county and the number of pending applications. If, in his opinion, the situation does not justify the employment of additional staff, he indicates that fact to the Director of Public Assistance and recommends that further consideration be given to the request of the local supervisor before it is granted.



Upon receipt of a personnel requisition from the Personnel Officer, the merit system agency circularizes the highest ranking eligibles and certifies the required number of those available. Accompanying the certificate of eligibles, the merit system agency forwards to the Personnel Officer the examination files of the certified eligibles. After receipt and review of such materials the Personnel Officer routes them to the proper supervisory authority, instructing such supervisors to interview the eligibles and make recommendations as to the ones to be employed. If such recommendations are otherwise satisfactory, the Personnel Officer endorses and transmits the recommendations to the administrator or executive director, who constitutes the final appointing authority.<sup>4</sup>

If the name of an eligible is passed over in connection with three separate appointments made from that register, the Merit System Supervisor may be requested in writing that the name of such eligible be omitted from any subsequent certification to the agency from the same register, and also from registers for higher classes of positions in the same series.

Selection for appointment to professional positions is a joint responsibility of the Personnel Officer and the Director of Public Assistance. The concern of the Personnel Officer should be one of procedure and overall organizational structure, rather than actual selection. The actual selection should be made either by the Director of Public Assistance or his field supervisory staff, depending upon the position involved. On the other hand, appointments to clerical positions might well become the general responsibility of the Personnel Officer. The merit system agency should review all appointments to ascertain whether all rules

and regulations are being fully observed.

When the original eligible registers expire<sup>5</sup> or are exhausted, and during the interim preceding the establishment of new lists, it is often the responsibility of the Merit System Council and Supervisor to determine whether or not appropriate related registers exist. If certain registers are declared appropriate, they may be utilized in the regular fashion. If there is no register deemed appropriate by the Merit System Council and Supervisor, that fact is certified to the appointing agency. In such cases it is necessary for the agency to make a provisional appointment. Before such provisional appointment can be made, the qualifications of the appointee must be certified by the Merit System Supervisor as meeting the minimum educational and experience requirements for the position. The determination of the Supervisor in such cases is final.

IT SHOULD be pointed out at this juncture that proper planning both on the part of the operating department and the merit system office should largely eliminate the necessity for provisional appointments except in unexpected emergencies. If an expansion of welfare services is contemplated, necessitating the employment of additional staff, the merit system agency should be advised as soon as possible of the anticipated personnel needs so that examinations may be scheduled immediately and lists established by the time the new positions are ready to be filled. Provisional appointments, especially in rural county offices, are extremely undesirable, resulting in public criticism of the welfare program and the merit system. This is particularly true if one or two eligibles are on the local register. These eligibles naturally feel that they should receive preference over someone who has not taken the examination, despite

<sup>4</sup> The state office review of district office recommendations, particularly with respect to professional staff, is first made by the Director of Public Assistance prior to the routing of such recommendations to the Personnel Officer. The Personnel Officer then indicates the action with respect to each eligible appearing on the certificate, and returns the certificate to the merit system agency.

<sup>5</sup> The normal life of a register is two years from the date of its establishment. This period may be shortened or extended by the Council and Supervisor with the approval of the operating agency.

the fact that under such a set of circumstances the agency has the technical right to make a provisional appointment.

Immediately upon the establishment of a new register, three names are certified to the agency for original appointment, replacing the provisional appointment. If the provisional employee appears on such certificate he may be given an original appointment and retained in the service. If his name does not so appear, he must be dismissed and be replaced by one of the three appearing on the certificate.

In case it is necessary to employ one or more persons for a short period of time and it is not practicable to select such employees from eligible registers, an emergency appointment may be made. Emergency appointments cannot continue longer than thirty days unless the emergency still continues and such fact is agreed to by the Merit System Supervisor, whereupon the appointment may be extended an additional thirty days. Under no circumstances can an emergency appointment extend for longer than sixty days within any calendar year. In order that the privilege of making emergency appointments not be abused, it is desirable that the Personnel Officer investigate every request of a department head for an emergency appointment and to determine whether sufficient justification exists for such action. A further similar investigation should be made by the Merit System Supervisor.

#### INTERNAL PERSONNEL TRANSACTIONS

**T**HE probationary period constitutes a tool which, if handled courageously and intelligently, becomes a highly valid phase of the selection process under a merit system. Responsibility for the intelligent use of the probationary period rests entirely with the operating agency and the Personnel Officer. Dismissal or retention of probationary employees should be based upon a service rating,<sup>6</sup> supplemented, when neces-

<sup>6</sup> A service rating system has recently been installed on an experimental basis in the Missouri Social Security

sary, by a narrative evaluation by the employee's immediate supervisor. The merit system agency reviews dismissals during the probationary period and questions them only if the review shows that dismissal was due to factors other than unsatisfactory performance. One month prior to the end of the probationary period the Personnel Officer obtains from the division director the service rating and a recommendation as to whether or not the employee should be given a permanent appointment. On the basis of such appraisals the Personnel Officer makes appropriate recommendations to the administrator, and if it is determined that the services of the employee have been unsatisfactory, the Personnel Officer then notifies the employee that his services will be terminated.

Internal personnel transactions relating to promotions, transfers, salary advancements, dismissals, and demotions, constitute another area of responsibility that belongs primarily to the Personnel Officer. These transactions are based to a considerable extent upon recommendations of immediate supervisors, and it is only in the matter of promotions that the merit system agency participates to any considerable degree. If the individual to be promoted already occupies a place on the register for the class of position to which he is being promoted, his name is certified from such register. If an individual to be promoted has not already attained eligibility status for the higher class, it is necessary for the merit system agency to determine whether the employee satisfies the minimum qualifications of training and experience for the position. To this end the agency must prepare and administer an appropriate competitive or non-competitive promotional examination at the earliest opportunity.<sup>7</sup> All promotion

Commission, but the system is not yet fully operative.

<sup>7</sup> The rules of the Missouri Merit System Council concerning promotion differ markedly from those of most states. A place on the higher register is not an absolute prerequisite to promotion. Neither is promotion limited to the top three names resulting from a promotional examination. Any employee may be promoted to a posi-

recommendations ultimately reach the Personnel Officer, who in turn presents his recommendations to the director.

**R**ECOMMENDATIONS for salary advancement are made by the immediate supervisor and forwarded to the Personnel Officer. If such recommendations are structurally sound and are justifiable, as evidenced by service rating and seniority records, and are possible within budgetary limitations, they are nominally recommended for approval by the Administrator.

The same power of review is exercised by the Personnel Officer with respect to demotions or dismissals. In addition to this, however, demoted or dismissed employees who have permanent status possess the right of appeal to the Merit System Council and are entitled to a public hearing. It may be noted that all records of personnel transactions are submitted to the merit system agency in order that such agency may ascertain whether all rules and regulations are being observed.

Record keeping<sup>8</sup> and scheduling of leaves and vacations constitute a primarily responsibility of the Personnel Officer. He is responsible for the preparation of the payroll and its certification to the State Auditor for payment. The payroll must also be certified by the merit system agency prior to payment, in order that no salary payments be made which are not in conformity with the classification and compensation plans.<sup>9</sup>

It should be mentioned at this point that

tion in a higher class (1) if he meets the minimum qualifications of training and experience for the higher class, or (2) if he has passed, or passes subsequent to promotion and examination for the higher class. If he is promoted pending such an examination and subsequently fails the examination, he is demoted to his previous class.

<sup>8</sup> With reference to the general subject of personnel records, it would appear desirable that records and transaction procedures of the operating department and the civil service agency should be coordinated and interlocked as far as is administratively possible. Through such coordination of records a considerable amount of duplication of work may be eliminated, and the interchange of personnel statistics and reports will be facilitated.

<sup>9</sup> The Missouri rules require that a copy of the payroll be made available to the merit system agency for check-

ing purposes, but does not require certification by the merit system agency prior to payment.

a very important aspect of merit system administration under the Social Security Act lies in the periodic personnel audit conducted by the State Technical Advisory Service<sup>10</sup> of the Social Security Board. These audits are conducted by Board representatives with the view to ascertaining whether or not the merit system in operation in any particular state conforms to the minimum standards of personnel administration established by the Board. These audits cover the records of both the operating department and the merit system agency. Therefore, in reality, there here exists three so-called "lines of defense" with respect to the policing phases of civil service. The Personnel Officer is naturally expected not to take actions to which exception might be taken by either the Merit System Supervisor or the Social Security Board; likewise, the merit system agency is cautious lest it approve any irregular action.

#### IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND SERVICE RATINGS

**T**HE function of training is a joint responsibility of the Director of Public Assistance and the Personnel Officer, the former being largely responsible for the content of the training program and the latter for its procedural administration. Members of the professional staff specifically engaged in training functions in their local areas are responsible first to the director or administrative head in that area and secondarily to the Director of Public Assistance or the State Case Work Supervisor in the state office. The Personnel Officer is almost entirely responsible for training programs for clerical workers. His responsibility embraces the organization, planning and scheduling of training classes and the obtaining and distribution of training material.

ing purposes, but does not require certification by the merit system agency prior to payment.

<sup>10</sup> The State Technical Advisory Service has been established as a division within the Social Security Board for the primary purpose of rendering aid to states in setting up merit system programs in conformity with the requirements of the Social Security Act.

Considerable difficulty has been encountered in Missouri in connection with the installation of service ratings. Various field supervisors and department heads presented different ideas as to the type of service rating form to be used and the traits and definitions to be adopted. Much time and discussion was given as to how the service ratings were to be obtained and how they would be utilized after they were completed.

In order to obtain the opinion of a representative group of the agency staff, two committees were appointed to make a study of service ratings and to study an outline of a service rating form suggested by the Personnel Officer and Merit System Supervisor. One committee was composed of members of the supervisory staff of the professional workers and the other of supervisory clerks representing the clerical workers. When the members of these committees were called to the state office for a meeting, they were quite familiar with service ratings in use in other jurisdictions and in private industry. Because of this knowledge they were able to offer many suggestions and recommendations regarding service ratings which were subsequently adopted.

As service ratings in the state welfare agency are in the early stages of development, it is not yet clear as to just where the line of authority should be drawn. It would appear, however, that responsibility for the installation and maintenance of a system of service ratings should belong to the operating agency. The Personnel Officer should be responsible for the development and application of necessary personnel techniques and for procedural administration; the Director of Public Assistance should be responsible for technical advice with reference to professional positions; and the Merit System Supervisor should be called upon for advice and assistance where necessary. Copies of service ratings should be made available to the merit system agency in order that that agency may make both periodic and continuous determination as to the adequacy of service reports and to investi-

gate those personnel actions in seeming non-conformity with job performance as reflected in service and seniority records.<sup>11</sup>

#### EMPLOYEE ACTIVITIES AND GENERAL PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

MANY very important, yet every-day functions of personnel management have been passed over in the foregoing discussion—functions such as the furnishing of leadership, maintenance of morale and *esprit de corps*, and adjustment of employee grievances with reference to hours, compensation and working conditions. Needless to say, success or failure in these activities depends largely upon the leadership and initiative of the departmental Personnel Officer. The mediation and adjustment of grievances on the part of agency employees, for example, constitutes a somewhat more difficult problem in welfare agencies than in other state services because of the tendency toward increasing professionalization occurring in the field of social work.

The low salary scale prevalent in many public welfare departments, which makes the maintenance of high employee morale a most difficult achievement, presents a challenge to the leadership and ingenuity of the Personnel Officer. Likewise, the probability that public service unions will continue to expand their activities constitutes an important problem for him.

With the growing emphasis upon the professional and technical aspects of welfare services, it is imperative that the importance of personnel functions be given adequate recognition. Although the merit system amendment to the Social Security Act has resulted in a standardization of many of these functions, it is apparent that, without a vigorous implementation, many of the benefits to be gained through the extension of civil service to state public welfare agencies will go unrealized.

<sup>11</sup> The Missouri rules do not so provide. It would appear desirable that such a provision be incorporated in the minimum personnel standards of the Social Security Board, and consequently, into state rules.



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# Personnel Administration in the Department of State Division of Foreign Service Personnel

PARMELY C. DANIELS

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THE personnel man today is more an adviser and less a manager. His position close to "top management" is not due to management's desire to divide or relinquish authority, but because it feels the need for advice from one who has specialized in the personnel side of its problems. The value of his recommendation depends upon the competence of the analysis and judgment entering into it, of course, but it depends equally upon the conviction of management and its determination to put the advice into effect. To perform this service the personnel organization must be flexible.

If the recommendations of a personnel adviser are sound and supported by appropriate research and counsel, they will be recognized and adopted by the management. If they are not sound in the eyes of the management or are not sufficiently supported or explained to engage wholehearted approval and cooperation, their enforcement by the personnel man as an administrator is not the answer. The personnel man must have the courage to make adequate investigation and clear recommendation and let the case rest with the management without accepting responsibility for the results. This does not detract from his place "close to top management." Management depends upon him as much as ever, but wants to, and should, remain the management.

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This view is a natural swing away from the tendency of recent years, and is here stated, not as philosophy, but as the guide to practice in an organization wherein it is functioning effectively—the Division of Foreign Service Personnel of the Department of State.

The American Foreign Service fortunately has had the opportunity of initiating its program of personnel development in the midst of this pendulum swing under the able administration of one of the most capable career officers in the service, the Honorable G. Howland Shaw, who has recently been appointed Assistant Secretary of State in charge of personnel and budget matters. Our nation has found a liaison service with other nations to be of increasing value and importance. Apace with its increasing usefulness, the Foreign Service<sup>1</sup> has grown from a relatively small group of consuls and diplomats who knew each other personally and were known by their employer, to a far-flung and expanding organization of over 4,000 people performing a wide variety of services.

Foreign Service officers are appointed after examination<sup>2</sup> and given probationary

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<sup>1</sup> This foreign Service is distinct from the Washington staff of the Department of State, which is under executive civil service. It is a career service, established under the Rogers Act of July 1, 1924, and the present classification and compensation plans are determined by the Act of February 23, 1931, as amended.

<sup>2</sup> The entrance examinations include a four-day written examination covering basic knowledge and general ability, a personal appearance before an oral examining

assignments to the field, where they perform, under supervision, some of the usual duties of a career officer. They are then given a course of instruction in the Foreign Service Officer's Training School, after which they are assigned to the field as vice-consuls. Advancement, based upon the officer's ability and merit, may lead to appointment as Counselor of Embassy or Consul General. Those who demonstrate special capacity are recommended to the President for promotion to Minister or Ambassador.

#### ORGANIZATION FOR PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

THE chief of the Division of Foreign Service personnel is, by law, a class one Foreign Officer and *ipso facto* a member of the Board of Foreign Service Personnel which recommends personnel actions to the Secretary of State. The other members of the Board are three Assistant Secretaries of State, Mr. Shaw acting as chairman.

In the course of the expansion of the service it became apparent that many problems demanded the undivided attention and advice of someone other than a member of that group in order that the officers responsible for the administration of the organization could deal with matters pertaining to Foreign Service with competent advice on personnel matters. The department wanted therefore to set someone apart from the administrative officers to examine the service, study its problems, and advise concerning its improvement, its current problems, and necessary personnel actions.

Such a job is not one for a staff of specialists, except in fields where it is found that the problems are constant. It is seldom either economical or productive of the highest quality of results to maintain a group of technicians for handling selection examinations, forms and procedures, training manuals, employee handbooks, and so forth. Such a group is not likely to include the most

appropriate expert for each specific problem as it arises, and some of the "made work" to keep them all continuously busy is of doubtful value. Certainly there is a lot of undesirable duplication of effort among various agencies working with like problems. Meanwhile, the government as a whole is replete with men experienced in the special fields of the particular problems and their talents are disregarded.

RATHER than attempting to centralize the solution of personnel problems, it was felt that it would be better to take each problem as it arises, define it carefully, determine the type of "brains" needed to solve it, assemble the best qualified specialists in the government service or elsewhere, get the benefit of their coordinated abilities, formulate recommendations, translate them to the operating officials, and dismiss the group in order to tackle the next problem.

This method has been proving quite successful in advising on personnel matters pertaining to the Foreign Service. One object of study, for example, is the type of personnel most desirable for the Foreign Service. Preliminary investigations of available data have been made in order to delineate the problem more clearly. For this work temporary technical and statistical assistance was borrowed from other agencies competent in the field. A factorial analysis of the members of the examining board with reference to the oral examination, various correlation tables of written and oral examination results, and similar investigations formed the basis for certain immediate recommendations for revision of procedures. These studies were the occasion for seeking the advice and guidance of the best men in the field, such as Dr. L. L. Thurstone of the University of Chicago and Dr. M. W. Richardson of the United States Civil Service Commission.

Again, written examinations must be prepared every year to seek out and measure certain aspects of the qualifications required for the service. The various parts of this

board for those successful in the written examination, and a comprehensive physical examination.

lengthy and comprehensive examination are assigned to appropriate scholars and specialists on a consulting basis. When the material has been prepared, it is then collated and organized into final form by a competent officer in the Department, Mr. Joseph C. Green, member since 1931 of a committee to revise the Foreign Service examinations. The examinations are administered by the United States Civil Service Commission and the parts graded by the specialists devising them.

#### EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELFARE

**I**N THE improvement of the welfare of the service and in the interests of efficiency and fair dealing, a general health program has been developed using similar methods. The procedure followed in developing this program may well be scrutinized as another example of the general approach taken by the Department in solving its personnel problems. The various offices of the Foreign Service are not all equally suited to the maintenance of the health of our officers and employees and their families. In fact, it is designated in the Act of February 23, 1931, that certain places by reason of climatic or other extreme conditions are to be classed as unhealthful posts and at such posts "each year of duty . . . shall be counted as one year and one-half . . . for the purpose of retirement. . . ."

In order to recommend a sound revision of the list of these "unhealthful" posts, a committee of experts in public health and sanitation was called upon to assist in developing and conducting a thorough-going study of the health and sanitation conditions of all posts. More effectively than general professional assistants could have developed the study, these experts, whose business it is to know more about this field than any others in the federal service, assembled an appropriate questionnaire which has been distributed to a statistically selected sample group of posts. Replies have been received and analyzed and a revised form has been prepared for general distribution and sur-

vey. The voluminous results of this inquiry will be studied by the United States Public Health Service and, in collaboration with the Department of State, recommendations will be made concerning proper length of duty at each post, frequency of leave, types of personnel suitable for each post, possible improvements in living and working conditions, suitable successive posts of duty, and particular hazards and inconveniences of each post.

Similarly, with the cooperation of medical authorities of the Army, Navy, and Public Health Service and others, improved standards of medical examination for both prospective personnel and those in the service are to be developed. Particular health hazards at each of the posts are being anticipated by specially prepared health leaflets on each of the subjects, which are distributed appropriately and constitute a loose-leaf reference volume on the preservation of health particularly adapted to each post. Emergency conditions and epidemics of war are met in the same way.

Adjustments to unfamiliar and shifting food supplies and fluctuating prices in many foreign areas have made it desirable to furnish these places with basic advice on nutrition. The maintenance of a balanced diet is particularly important in times of stress, especially if such a diet must be maintained under difficult circumstances. To prepare this advice appropriate specialists were assembled from the Army and Navy, the Bureau of Home Economics of the Department of Agriculture, the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor, the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Federal Security Agency, the National Institute of Health of the Public Health Service, and the Food and Drug Administration. The results of their concerted deliberations were not only superior to those which any likely staff of specialists in the State Department would assemble but were of greater value than any of these several agencies alone could assemble. Moreover, this body of consultants voiced a sincere appreciation of the oppor-

tunity of jointly considering many of the problems discussed.

THESE are a few illustrations of the way in which current problems of the Foreign Service are being met. The many experts in the various branches of the federal service are willing and anxious to contribute to the solution of problems in their particular fields. They are called upon when needed and are adjourned when the problems are solved. The best advice the country affords has gone into the recommendations and there is no staff of zealous assistants remaining to seek further appropriate duties.

It is true that, as the experience of the

service progresses, certain types of problems may recur with sufficient regularity to warrant the permanent services of an expert who will devote himself to the solution of those problems. Such occasion, however, has not yet arisen. As administrative procedures are developed they are handed to administrative personnel for execution. A division of Foreign Service administration keeps administrative records, executes personnel actions, and performs similar functions. Pay rolls are handled by a division of accounts. The division of Foreign Service personnel sticks to investigation, counsel, and recommendations—the sphere of true personnel work.

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# COURT DECISIONS

EDITED BY H. ELIOT KAPLAN

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## NON-PARTISAN MERIT BASIS DEFINED

**T**HE Arizona Supreme Court in passing upon the issue of good faith in the abolition of a position sought to add to the many definitions of the merit system. In *Donaldson v. Siske*, 113 P. 2d. 860, it defined the phrase "non-partisan merit basis" as having

acquired a distinct and well known meaning, and its essentials are in substance that the appointment of all employees who come under the system should be made on the basis . . . of open and competitive examinations arranged to determine which of the applicants for the position is best fitted to perform its duties, regardless of political affiliations or past record, and . . . removal from the position should be based only on unfitness for the work . . . , and not upon personal considerations.

The case involved the question of good faith in abolition of a position. After reviewing record, the court states: "Unless this system is enforced in its spirit as well as its letter, the laudable desire of the legislature to make appointment and tenure in public service based solely on merit will be defeated."

Pointing out the court's general reluctance to interfere with the judgment and discretion of the civil service commission, the court stated that it felt it its "duty in any case of this nature . . . to look through the form to the substance of any act of the commission in determining whether the law has been complied with or not."

## DISTINCTION BETWEEN PUBLIC OFFICER AND EMPLOYEE

**T**HE Montana Supreme Court undertook to define the distinction between a public officer and an employee in *State ex rel Dunn v.*

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*Ayers*, 113 p. 2d 785. The distinction the court makes is as follows:

For a person to be "public officer" as distinguished from mere "employee" the position must be (1) created by the constitution, legislature or municipal or other body under authority conferred by legislation; (2) portion of government's sovereign power must be delegated to holder to be exercised for public benefit; (3) powers and duties must be defined directly or indirectly by the Legislature or thru legislative authority; (4) duties must be performed independently and without control of superior power other than the law, unless they be those of inferior or subordinate office created or authorized by legislation and placed thereby under general control of superior officer or body; (5) position must have some permanency and continuity and not be only temporary or occasional; and (6) holder thereof must take and file official oath, hold commission or other written authority, and give official bond, if required by proper authority.

(See also *Parker v. Riley* 113 p. 2d 873 [Cal.], involving right of member of legislature to accept any "office, trust or employment" under the State under the California constitution.)

## MANDATORY AND DIRECTORY STATUTES

**C**VIL service administrators, in appointing employees, should be careful to distinguish between mandatory and directory provisions of the civil service statutes, since it is settled that failure to comply fully with a mandatory provision invalidates the appointment, while a directory provision may in some cases be excused. The distinction was emphasized in *Steiner v. City of Reading*, 19 Atl. (2d) 283 (Pa.), where the statute required that appointees, after having been certified as eligible, shall be nominated for appointment by the head of the department in which the appointment is made. This provision was held merely procedural and therefore directory, so that non-compliance did not disturb an otherwise regular appointment. A statutory provision is mandatory when it bears a substantial "relation to the essential purposes of the law"—so

that civil service provisions, to be mandatory, must bear materially on the question of merit and fitness. In the instant case the power of nomination for appointment bore no relation to merit and fitness, since nomination was restricted to the four highest eligibles, already determined to be entitled to civil service appointment and the nomination must be approved by the city council. Thus, the department head, in nominating for appointment, performed a purely procedural act, and the failure to perform this act should not be allowed to defeat an otherwise regular civil service appointment.

APPLICATION OF MUNICIPAL CIVIL SERVICE  
PROVISIONS TO EMPLOYEES OF STATE-  
CREATED AGENCY

**E**MPLOYEES of the New York City Board of Transportation, which was created by state statute to operate the city subway system, were held nevertheless to be employees of the city so as to be amenable to city charter provisions. The court said:

It is true that the board of transportation is a state instrumentality but it is so only for the purpose of operating and managing the Independent Subway System as the city's agent . . . ; its expenses are paid by the city; employees of the Board are city employees, paid out of the city treasury; their service is city service and they are authorized to join in the city pension system because they are city employees.

Thus, a provision of the New York City charter to the effect that employees who shall commit any fraud upon the city shall "be excluded forever after from receiving or holding any . . . employment under the city government," was held applicable to Board of Transportation employees who had stolen city funds while acting as such employees, with the result that the court denied the validity of subsequent certification of these employees to other civil service positions. *Ferdinand v. Moses*, 26 N. Y. Supp. (2d) 382 (Sup. Ct., Sp. Term).

"COVERING-IN" PROCESS UPHOLD

**A**NTICIPATING unification of the New York City transit system, the legislature in 1939, under the Wicks law, authorized the city to continue employing the personnel of the privately owned subway systems without requiring them to take competitive examinations, when, as, and if the city takes over such privately owned transit systems.

In June, 1940, the unification plan, whereby the city took over the privately operated transit lines, was effected. Under the terms of the Wicks Law the incumbents of the positions were to continue in the noncompetitive class for a period of one year, thus giving the civil service commission opportunity to study the classification of the 32,000 positions involved and allocating the incumbents in accordance with classifications. After one year the positions were to be classified as competitive, wherever practicable, and those holding positions which would fall in the competitive class would be continued in the competitive class without further examinations.

In March, 1941, a number of proceedings were instituted challenging the constitutionality of the covering-in process provided by the Wicks law. It was contended that under the New York constitution, providing that appointments and promotions in the civil service shall be made after competitive examinations wherever practicable, the legislature had no authority to authorize the covering in of all the transit employees taken over by the city. They contended particularly that it could in no event apply to positions such as clerks, stenographers, engineers, policemen, etc., positions which have long been recognized as practicable to fill by competitive examination.

In *Matter of Felder v. Fullen, et al*, 27 N. Y. S. 2d 699 (April 10, 1941) the New York Supreme Court (Special Term) upheld the validity of the covering-in process under the terms of the Wicks law and reconciled its provisions with the purpose and intent of the constitutional merit system requirement, pointing out that the legislature was presented with the problem of exercising its judgment and in the light of the unusual situation presented it was faced with three urgent problems: (1) interruption of the transit service; (2) safety of the continued service; and (3) fairness to the army of trained, experienced and efficient workers who were in the employ of the private companies. In a rather long opinion in which the court reviews the leading cases in the New York courts relating to the application of the constitutional merit provision, the court stated in part:

This case is unique in the annals of civil service law. No other case is precisely in point for no similar attempt has ever been made by the people to acquire going concerns of such magnitude as the IRT and BMT

systems. Obviously, the extension of governmental activity may often give rise to new problems and this is particularly true when that extension involves taking over agencies formerly operated in a private capacity.

By virtue of the Wicks Act the City of New York was enabled to acquire much more than an aggregation of physical assets. It was enabled to take over going concerns and to acquire the collective knowledge, skill and experience of the staff of great railroad systems, without which uninterrupted and efficient operation might well have been impaired, if not rendered impossible.

That the legislative determination of policy was in accord with the practical necessities of the situation, that it conforms with reason, common sense and fairness, is established by affidavits of experienced railroad men to whom the task of operating a system of this magnitude was not some abstract book problem, but a real, practical responsibility. . . .

The adjustments that would necessarily have resulted from any competitive examination, either for all members of the unit or any division thereof, would have disrupted the organization. Even if sufficient time had existed for the holding of competitive examinations, the morale and efficiency of the respective organizations would have been seriously impaired had such examinations been attempted. The same considerations rendering competitive examination of all the employees impracticable likewise rendered such examinations for groups of these employees impracticable. Any attempt on the part of the Legislature to differentiate among classes of employees by requiring competitive examinations for certain classes and not for others would have disrupted the business of the two systems, and the morale of the organization as a unit would have been impaired.

The Legislature was faced with the necessity of treating the problem of unification in its entirety. The private companies were required to operate their systems up to the very moment of unification and from that moment the City had to continue that operation without any interruption whatever. . . .

Section 6 of Article V of the Constitution is a practical and far-sighted provision. It prescribed an inflexible rule that appointment and promotion in the public service 'shall be made according to merit and fitness.' This is the stated objective which must always be kept in view. But the framers of the provision made a clear distinction between the end and the means. They foresaw that the means by which the objective might be attained could not be prescribed in terms of a rigid formula. Hence they prescribed a flexible rule of examinations wherever practicable, which rule has flourished without the presentation of exact and coded formularies and has been jealously safeguarded by the courts in all proper cases.

The section provides for three possible procedures: (1) no examination; (2) examination; (3) competitive examination.

Merit and fitness are to be ascertained by examination 'so far as practicable,' and the examinations are to be competitive 'so far as practicable. . . .'

The framers of the Civil Service article were drafting a constitutional provision and they foresaw that sufficient flexibility must be allowed to provide for the unforeseeable contingencies of the future. Speaking of a different constitutional provision in *People v. Draper*, 15 N. Y., 532, the court observed (p.553): 'Hence, to allow a verge for unforeseen contingencies is wisdom, as flexibility is strength. . . .'

The mandate of the Constitution and the laws enacted pursuant thereto were not designed to be a rule of thumb, but were made to secure the benefits of civil service 'by means which are at once practicable and in the best interest of public business and those who con-

duct it on behalf of Government' (*Matter of Madden v. Reavy*, 284 N.Y., 418.421).

The Legislature in drafting the Wicks Act, at all times had clearly in view the constitutional mandate for appointment on the basis of merit and fitness. There was no purpose to evade its precise requirements for examination wherever practicable. It sought diligently to meet every requirement of the Constitution within the sphere of practicability. Here there was no mere legislative fiat totally ignoring the constitutional mandate for some form of examination wherever practicable (cf. *Matter of Ottinger v. Civil Service Commission*, 240 N.Y., 435). The Legislature, aware of the unique and original problem of a municipality taking over a public utility under private ownership and operating it itself, properly determined how the transition should be made without chaos, loss and confusion, and still keep within the bounds of constitutional propriety. It is for that reason that the Legislature chose to place all the positions first in the non-competitive class so that the municipality could, by such qualifying examinations as the Civil Service Commissions saw fit to give, further determine the merit and fitness of the incumbents independently of the private owners' methods of testing such merit and fitness. . . .

Experience with the Civil Service Article has demonstrated the wisdom of this flexibility. All the major extensions of civil service in this state have been accomplished, and in large part made possible, by the fact that the constitutional provision permits such extension to be made in a constructive, and not a destructive manner. When extensions are made in the public service itself, the incumbents of the positions are not swept out of office. They are taken into the civil service as were the employees of the private transit companies in the situation here involved.

I therefore conclude: 1. The mandate of the Constitution was fully complied with by the Legislature. The facts produced in the record before this court fully support the declared policy of the Legislature and its findings that competitive examination under the unique circumstances of this case was wholly impracticable. 2. The qualifications prescribed by the Legislature for continued employment were not in any way unreasonable, arbitrary or capricious; on the contrary they constituted the most appropriate test of merit and fitness which could have been devised to enable the City to continue the uninterrupted, safe and efficient operation of the acquired transit facilities. The constitutional test of merit and fitness has been reasonably applied in this case. The Legislature has not sought to evade either the letter or the spirit of the civil service requirement of the Constitution, but on the contrary has substantially complied with the constitutional mandate under the unique circumstances involved in the unification of the transit systems of the city. The classification by the Legislature in the non-competitive class of the employees of the private companies, under the conditions prescribed in the Wicks Act, was an appropriate classification which resulted in their lawful employment in the Civil Service. 3. The Wicks Act accords with the universal principle and practice of covering in positions when civil service is extended to an area in which it did not formerly operate. This principle is particularly applicable to the transfer from private to public control of a great transportation system with its trained personnel. The provision covering such lawfully appointed employees into the competitive class upon reclassification, is valid.

The ultimate decision of the higher courts will have a direct bearing, it is believed, on the validity of the provision in the new law extend-

ing the civil service law to the county, town, village and other local jurisdictions in the State of New York. The new extension law, known as the "Fite Law," contains a "covering-in" section modeled after the Wicks Law provision cited in the court opinion reviewed above.

#### INTERPRETATION OF CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENT

**A** NEW YORK law, Chapter 927 of the Laws of 1939, which authorized taking over employees of the private transit lines by the City of New York under a subway unification agreement, provided in effect that alien employees of privately owned subway lines in the City of New York shall be taken into the employ of the city Board of Transportation if such employees have filed "declarations of intention" to become citizens, before enactment of the statute or within six months after its effective date, and that an alien shall be dismissed from such employment if he fails to prosecute his application for citizenship in good faith and with due diligence.

In *Matter of Mazzarella v. Kern, et al*, 285 N. Y., the petitioner who was an employee of the Brooklyn Manhattan Transit Company and who had served for over twenty-five years with the company, was not a citizen at the time the act became effective. He had, however, ten months before the effective date of the legislative act filed with the Federal Naturalization Bureau "an Application For a Certificate of Arrival and Preliminary Form For a Declaration of Intention." Due to the number of similar applications and the policy of the Federal Naturalization Bureau not to consider an application out of the order of its receipt, the petitioner's application was not acted upon by the federal authority until two years after it had been filed, at which time the petitioner was permitted to file his "declaration of intention." Meanwhile, the period allowed by the statute within which to file a "declaration of intention" to become a citizen (six months from the effective date of the act) had expired. The petitioner was dismissed from the service for failure to file his "declaration of intention" within the time specified in the statute. The court held that the use of the words "declaration of intention" did not specify the precise form described in Sections 373 and 409 of Title 8 of the U. S. Code, that such upholding would be tantamount to holding "that the legislature

established a qualification which the very employees for whom it was intended would be unable to fulfill." Such an emphasis "of form over matter," stated the court would defeat the purpose of the act in that the public would be deprived of the services of experienced workmen.

The court construed the words "application for citizenship," used in another part of the statute, virtually synonymous with the term "declaration of intention," holding that the legislature intended both to mean the series of acts necessary to obtain a "declaration of intention." "It was the act of initiating this process that the legislature had in mind," the court pointed out, "rather than a particular step in that process, when it used the phrase 'shall have filed declarations of intention to become citizens.'"

A concurring opinion held further that "where the law requires that for the exercise of a privilege or right a notice must be given or an act performed within a specified time, we have said that the requirement 'is not absolute and unyielding' (*Murphy v. Village of Fort Edward*, 213 N. Y. 397, 402); due diligence to comply with the statute as soon as possible should be sufficient and strict compliance should not be exacted, at least where the rights of no other persons are thereby destroyed or impeded."

#### CONTRACTUAL EMPLOYMENT

**T**HE New York Court of Appeals, in *Turel v. Delaney*, 285 N. Y. 16, 32 N. E. (2d) 774., has recently ruled invalid a contract by the Transportation Board employing physicians to supply medical care to workmen on the city subways. The Workmen's Compensation Law requires such care to be made available to them. Such employments may be made only in compliance with the civil service law and after competitive examination wherever practicable. The state civil service law applies to the New York City Board of Transportation, which operates the city-owned rapid transit system. The salaries of persons employed by the Board of Transportation to operate the subway system are paid out of the revenues derived from operation of the subway system. Appointments and promotions to any class or classes of employment in the operating division of the Board are like all other city employees, subject to the



provisions of the civil service law. The court held that the proprietary character of that phase of the Board's jurisdiction as related to actual operation of the subway system did not excuse it from compliance with the civil service rules.

In the case of *Drummond v. Kern*, 27 N. Y. S. 2d 332 (Sup. Ct., Sp. Term), the court distinguished the *Turel* case in holding that the Law Department in purchasing photographs from a firm of photographers without requirement of competitive examination was not violative of the civil service provisions of the state constitution. "The relationship here was at all times that of vendor and purchaser," stated the court. "There was no hiring, no appointment, no relation of master and servant." Referring to the *Turel* case, the court remarked that the physicians, in that case,

who in essence brought nothing to their jobs but their skill and their willingness to work, were employed for regular periods, at regular salaries. Here the petitioners are business men, entrepreneurs, waiting for business to come to them, and sending in their bills for such business as they have received. They hold no jobs, receive no salaries, use their own plant and equipment, work for anyone else they please, pay city sales taxes on what they sell to customers other than the city, and otherwise conduct a business.

However, a contract by a municipality to employ a civil engineer for a period of five years to aid in the solution of traffic and transit problems, which employment was authorized without regard to the civil service rules requiring examination, was held not to violate a charter provision that 'all positions in all departments and offices of the city and county . . . shall be included in the classified civil service. . . .' (*City and County of San Francisco v. Boyd*, 110 Pac. 2d., 1036). The Court here held that it was the intention of the framers of the civil service charter provisions 'that civil service should apply only to persons employed in permanent positions,' and that the engineer contractor was engaged to do a specific job 'and all of the assistants which he will employ from the typist in his office to his most highly paid engineer are to be instrumentalities of his own choosing and for whom he is to be responsible. They do not become city employees in the sense of that word as used in reference to the classified service, but are to be employees of the engineer contractor,' in connection with the service he is to render to the city and county.

#### PREVAILING RATE OF WAGES

**I**NTERPRETATION and construction of the so-called prevailing rate of wages law, which seeks to require public agencies to fix the rate of wages of its employees in accordance with the prevalent scale of wages in the particular industry or trade, has vexed many fiscal officers as well as personnel administrators. In two recent cases decided by the New

York Court of Appeals, *Matter of Heaney et al v. McGoldrick, et al*, 286 N. Y. 38 (June 12, 1941), and *Matter of Watson et al v. McGoldrick, et al*, 286 N. Y. 47 (June 12, 1941), the court has helped to clarify the application of the prevailing wages statute in three important respects:

1. There must be a fair and reasonable hearing allowed in connection with the determination of the prevailing rate of wages in the particular trade in the community involved.

2. Privileges and benefits accorded only to employees, such as pension allowances, vacation privileges, etc. may be considered in determining the ultimate relative status of skilled laborers, mechanics, etc. in the particular trade; but the period of service within the year, that is the number of days employed, whether 50 days, 100 days or 250 days within the year, may not be taken into consideration. In other words, the rate per day must be fixed regardless of the length of employment or continuity of employment within the year.

3. Public officers vested with authority and responsibility for determining the prevailing rate of wages may recognize "that difference in the field in which work is performed—the nature of the activities of the employer—divides workers performing similar work into different 'trades and occupations' within the meaning of the statute."

The court stated:

We have not overlooked that there is only one union rate for motor grader operators, but all the members of the union work in the same field and employment in that field is seldom steady. We point out only that union rates for similar work do vary at times in different fields of activities and at least in such cases the prevailing rate of pay in one field may furnish no reasonable basis for determination of the wages to which persons doing similar work in a different field are entitled under the statute. Then the term 'trade or occupation' as used in the statute must be given a narrower construction than it might have in other context.

The Comptroller erred, as we have said, in holding that under the statute the prevailing rate of pay of motor grader operators in private employ is not comparable with the wages of city employ because the difference in respect to permanency and continuity of employment and other benefits arising from employment by the city. Difference 'in respect to permanency and continuity of employment' is we repeat irrelevant where employment is in the same trade or occupation, but where work in one field is steady and work in another field is intermittent or seasonal or occasional and men performing the same kind of work in one field cannot at will obtain work in the other field and where real differences in conditions of employment and in the scope of activities in the two fields is reflected in different wage scales, then it may become a question of fact

whether persons employed to do similar work but in different fields are in fact engaged in the same 'trade or occupation.'

#### VALIDITY OF WAIVERS AS TO WAGES AND HOURS

THE Texas court of civic appeals upheld the validity of an agreement made between employees of the Fire Department of the City of Fort Worth, wherein the employees waived their privileges with respect to wages and hours of employment pending the determination of the validity of a statute. The statute made it necessary for the city to reduce the force in the Fire Department in order to comply with the statute designed to regulate hours of employment and wages in the fire department. The court in *City of Ft. Worth v. Morrison*, 152 S. W. 2d. 300 held such agreement to be valid and to be an enforceable contract supported by "sufficient consideration" and not void as against "public policy."

#### APPOINTMENTS—APPROPRIATE ELIGIBLE LIST

THE Court of Appeals affirmed the determination of the Appellate Court in *Matter of Friend v. Valentine*, 34 N. E. 2d 912 (originally reported in the April, 1941 issue of PUBLIC PERSONNEL REVIEW). The civil service commission had certified the eligible list for patrolman for filling the position of telephone operator in the Police Department on the representations by the Police Commissioner that the incumbent telephone operators would be required to perform some police functions and that it would serve to train them for later appointments to regular patrolman positions. The court held, however, that the clear statutory language of the civil service law demanded appointment from the civil service list established as a result of competitive examination for telephone operator. No opinion was written by the majority of the Court of Appeals. The minority opinion took the position that there ought not be interference by the court with the determination of the civil service commission as to the appropriateness of the eligible list for patrolman rather than telephone operator, nor with the wisdom of the choice of the list by the Commission, there being no showing of arbitrary or capricious action on the part of the commission or the Police Commissioner.

(Editor's Note: Subsequent action of the Police Commissioner in abolishing most of the positions and assigning the duties to members

of the police force already in the service was upheld by the court as being within the discretion of the Police Commissioner.)

#### PROVISIONAL APPOINTMENTS

AT THE 1941 session of the New York State legislature attempt was made to grant permanent status to a large number of war veterans who had been serving as temporary or provisional appointees for longer than five years. The incumbents had been originally employed in the Emergency Relief Bureau to handle claims for relief involving war veterans. This veterans division was transferred to the permanent City Public Welfare Department. The incumbents were continued on a temporary or provisional basis pending competitive examinations to fill the positions on a permanent basis. Many earlier attempts through legislation or litigation to continue the incumbents in permanent status proved abortive.

The Hampton bill, which became effective April 28, 1941, provided that no temporary or provisional appointee who was a veteran or volunteer fireman may be dismissed from the service except upon charges after a hearing with the right to review in the courts—a privilege theretofore accorded only to veterans and volunteer firemen holding permanent positions.

In *Matter of McCann v. Kern, et al*, 28 N. Y. S. 2d 321 (App. Div., June 18, 1941) the Hampton law was held to contravene the merit system provisions of the New York State constitution. The court held that it is well settled "that a temporary or provisional appointment to a competitive position cannot ripen into a permanent appointment." The existing eligible list for social investigator had been held appropriate for filling the petitioner's provisional positions and that provisionals may not hold positions to the exclusion of persons on appropriate lists therefor. The court held the new statute also void because:

it grants a privilege to one class of veterans and volunteer firemen and discriminates arbitrarily and unreasonably against all other veterans and volunteer firemen equally entitled, under the Constitution, to the same rights and privileges. This statute attempts to confine special privileges only to such veterans or exempt volunteer firemen as were employed before a specified date in a public welfare department and whose salary is paid from emergency relief taxes. It does all but name its particular beneficiaries, and comes within the condemnation of a statute unmistakably aimed to confer a favor on designated persons who are none the less designated though not specifically named.

**A** JANITOR in the public school system of Bridgeport had been serving for four years in such position. He claimed the right to continue in that position although the civil service charter provision fixed the term for a provisional appointee at not to exceed four months. He contended that he had complied with the spirit and intent of the new charter provision by his long period of service and that the new provisional appointment period was not intended to apply to persons of his status. The court overruled his contention in *Howe v. Civil Service Commission of Bridgeport*, 20 A. 2d 397 (Conn.).

The provisional appointment, the court held, did not ripen into a permanent one. The legislature's intent was that no position in the classified service could be filled except in accordance with the terms of the civil service amendment, which required competitive tests, even though the amendment itself contains no provision that all appointments in the classified service must be made only after competitive examinations. The court held further that the civil service commission was not estopped from claiming that the position was not permanently held merely because it attempted to hold a hearing on charges for the removal of the petitioner. The civil service commission could not by its own action endow the provisional appointee with permanent status.

#### PROMOTIONAL VERSUS OPEN COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS

**T**HE San Francisco city charter provides that the civil service commission "shall provide, wherever practicable, that vacancies shall be filled by promotion."

In *Allen et al v Howard M. McKinley et al* 42 Cal. App. (2d) 589, it was held that the commission abused its discretion, since it has only such powers as are conferred upon it by the charter. The California court took the position that the Civil Service Commission enjoys only those powers specifically granted it by the basic law under which it operates, and that it is barred from exercising any discretion with regard to specific provisions of the law. In support of this position two Illinois cases are cited, *Ptacek v. The People*, 194 Ill. 125, and *People v. Errant*, 229 Ill. 56. (See also *Rhodehammel v. C. S. Board of Oakland*, 42 Cal. App. [2d] 601.)

**I**N *Kinnerney v. Municipal Civil Service Commission of Hornell* 27 N. Y. S. 2d 321, App. Div., (May 21, 1941), the Appellate Division upheld the discretionary authority of the Commission to hold an open competitive examination for chief of the Fire Department of the City of Hornell, reversing the decision of the lower court which sought to compel the Commission to hold a promotion examination to fill the office.

#### PROMOTIONS—LACHES IN EXERCISING PRIVILEGE

**T**HE importance of diligence in complaining of administrative action was forcefully illustrated in *De Stefano v. Civil Service Comm. of New Jersey*, 18 Atl. (2d) 621 (N. J. Sup. Ct.). The state civil service act requires vacancies to be filled "as far as practicable, by promotions from among persons holding positions in a lower grade. . . ." The court deemed improper the action of the state civil service commission in conducting an open competitive examination for the position of patrolman, instead of a promotion examination from among chancemen who were appointed pursuant to city ordinance to aid in police work, and were deemed by the court to be regular members of the police department, of lower grade than patrolmen. Although the commission had statutory authority to conduct promotions only "as far as practicable," no attempt was made in the instant case to determine the practicability of promotion examination, so that the administrative action was held to be clearly in violation of the statute. However, the court held that the plaintiff's delay of a year in complaining of the appointment of someone other than a chanceman barred him from relief. The commission's action "constituted a merely irregular exercise of its statutory function, and not an excess of power that is to be denominated a nullity. In such circumstances, inexcusable delay operates as an estoppel against the assertion of the right to vacate the action; and this is the situation here. While laches, in its legal sense, ordinarily connotes delay injurious to another, the public interest demands that a challenge directed to the civil service commission's exercise of this authority be interposed with reasonable promptitude."

Relying on the doctrine of the above case (inexcusable delay), the court dismissed a certiorari proceeding brought by another com-

plainant also seeking to review the commission's action with respect to the appointment of patrolmen. (*Albert v. Caldwell*, 18 Atl. [2d] 623 [N. J. Sup. Ct.] ).

#### TRANSFERS

THE charter of San Francisco provides specifically that "whenever a position controlled by the civil service provisions of this charter is to be filled, the appointing officer shall make a requisition to the civil service commission for a person to fill it. Thereupon, the commission shall certify to the appointing officer the name and address of the person standing highest on the list of eligibles for such position." There is, however, no specific provision for transfers.

The court concluded that the commission may not permit a transfer merely at the request of an employee instead of certifying from the eligible list on which the petitioner's name appeared. The only authority for transfer is a rule of the commission, which authorizes transfers of employees with the approval of the commission, when the employees concerned have requested the transfer in writing, and have secured the approval of the respective appointing authorities. Such a condition does not apply in *Ballf. v. Civil Service Commission of City and County of San Francisco et al* 43 Cal. App. (2d) 227. The only course open to the commission upon request for a certification from an appointing officer was to certify to him the first name on the proper eligible list.

#### HOLDING TWO SALARIED POSITIONS

THE statutory right of civil service employees to two types of salary payments was upheld in *Bates v. State*, 200 So. 779 (Ala.). In that case, a statute provided that policemen and firemen of the City of Mobile shall receive one-half of the moneys obtained by the city from the operation of liquor stores in the city. Subsequently, a civil service statute was enacted providing a minimum pay plan for civil service employees. The court recognized that the subsequent civil service statute could, of course, repeal the prior liquor pay law, but held that repeals by implication will only result where the prior and later statutes are so clearly repugnant to each other as not to be able to be enforced together. The court was convinced, after reading the two statutes here involved, that

no such conflict existed, so that civil service employees were entitled to the benefits of both laws.

A CONSTITUTIONAL provision of Kentucky provides that no public officer, other than the Governor, may be paid salary or compensation exceeding \$5,000. The court construed this provision to apply to all classes of public officers and that it applies to an individual officer, as well as to a particular office. It applies also whether the individual holds one or more positions where the combined salary would exceed \$5,000 a year. The purpose of the constitutional provision, states the court, was to limit the total amount of compensation to any individual for a year's service. (*Talbott v. Thomas*, 151 S. W. 2d. 1) and (*Alvey v. Brigham*, 150 S. W. 2d. 936).

#### INTERPRETATION OF "POLITICAL ACTIVITY"

THE Ohio Supreme Court has upheld review that the Cleveland City Charter, which provides that "no person in the classified service of the city shall act as an officer of a political organization or take part in a political campaign . . ." prohibits city employees from campaigning for or against a bond issue, charter amendment, special tax levy, or any other issue submitted to the voters of the city in any election or referendum. (*State ex rel Green v. City of Cleveland*, 33 N. E. 2d., 35).

#### ABOLITION OF POSITIONS

THE budget for the City of Lawrence provided for the salary of a supervisor of swimming pools. In *Rappaport v. City of Lawrence*, 33 N. E. 2d. 290 (Mass.), the plaintiff had been promoted to that position in accordance with the civil service rules. The appropriation appeared, however, to have been exhausted because the officials had used the money for other municipal purposes. The plaintiff had been told to carry on his work by his superior, a member of the City Board of Aldermen, and that the matter would be adjusted later. The plaintiff thereupon continued performing his duties but the city later refused to pay his salary. The city contended that the plaintiff was not entitled to "continued employment at the expense of municipal economy" even if he were a civil service employee. The court, however, sided with the employee, holding:



He has continued to hold his position in the succeeding years, has been carried throughout upon the civil service rolls, and in each of the years with which we are here concerned sufficient appropriation was made to pay his wages. In these circumstances, even if it could be said that his original promotion to the position he has occupied since was in some respect defective, we think that it must be held to have been validly ratified. There is nothing in the record to show that the failure of the defendant to pay his wages . . . was due to uniform reductions. The admitted fact is that the money appropriated to pay his wages in full was unlawfully used in part for other purposes. . . . Failure of a city to appropriate sufficient money to pay the salary or wages of those in the classified public service without taking lawful measures to reduce their number<sup>1</sup> or their compensation does not affect its obligation and liability to pay them. The city cannot remain inactive, permit the employees to work at the rate of wages lawfully fixed, and then set up a lack of money as an excuse for not paying them."

However in *Dooling v. Fire Commissioner of Malden*, 34 N. E. 2d. 635, (Mass.), the same court held that where notice of abolition of the office of fire chief had been given in the interest of economy, such reasons of economy constitute "just cause" for removal of the incumbent.

(Editor's Note: The court here refers to suspension or lay-off for lack of work or lack of appropriation or lack of necessity of the position rather than dismissal from the service for misconduct or other delinquency. Unfortunately, the term "removal" is often used by the courts to denote removals for disciplinary reasons, as well as suspensions or lay-offs without fault on the part of the employee.)

In *City of Phoenix v. Powers*, 113 P. 2d 353 (Ariz.), it was held that

Where an employee's position is abolished and another appointed to perform substantially similar duties, whether under similar or other title, former incumbent is entitled to reinstatement with back pay, less amount earned during period. Mere change in name of position not good faith.

Special test may not be given an applicant unless his failure to take regular examination was due to manifest error or mistake of the Civil Service Board.

#### COMMISSION MAY INITIATE REMOVAL

AN INTERESTING case extending the scope of the personnel agency in removal proceedings was decided by the Iowa Supreme Court in *Misbach v. Civil Service Commission of Cedar Rapids*, 297 N. W. 284. The court held that the civil service commission had authority not only to hear or review removal proceedings but that under the civil service

provisions in force the commission could initiate removal proceedings. In acting in an appellate capacity the commission may affirm, modify or reverse any case on its merits. The statute (Section 5702, Code of 1939), provides:

No person holding civil service rights as provided in this chapter shall be removed, demoted or suspended arbitrarily, except as otherwise provided in this chapter, but may be removed, demoted or suspended after a hearing by a majority vote of the Civil Service Commission for neglect of duty, disobedience, misconduct, or failure to properly perform his duties.

The Civil Service Commission, the court held, had a dual responsibility: (1) to protect civil service employees in their positions; and (2) to protect the public from the consequences of the neglect or misconduct of the employees.

#### EVIDENCE TO SUSTAIN REMOVAL AFTER TRIAL

IN *Weber v. Town of Cheektowaga*, (34 N. E. 2d. 495) the petitioner, a civil service employee and exempt volunteer fireman (who under the New York Civil Service Law is entitled to trial on charges in case of dismissal and right to review in the court in the nature of certiorari) was removed by the Town Board after charges preferred against him by the Superintendent of Public Works of the town. The lower Appellate Court had sustained the employee's claim that he had been dismissed without substantial evidence to sustain the charges of neglect of duty, absence from duty and intoxication while on duty. The Court of Appeals reversed laying down the following rule in regard to review by the court in cases of this character:

The duty of supervision of the employees of the town devolve upon the Town Board selected by the inhabitants of the town for that, among other purposes. In case of dereliction of an employee in the performance of duty, the determination upon the facts is for the Town Board, and such determination will not be set aside by the courts unless it is unsupported by proof sufficient to satisfy a reasonable man, of all the facts necessary to be proved in order to authorize the determination, or unless there is such a preponderance of proof against the existence of any of the facts necessary to be proved as would require the setting aside of the verdict of a jury. Upon the record in the case at bar, not only was there competent proof of all the facts necessary to be proved in order to authorize the making of the determination, but also it cannot be said that there was such a preponderance of proof against the finding of guilt that the verdict of a jury affirming the existence thereof would be set aside by the court as against the weight of the evidence. Under such circumstances, neither the Special Term nor the Appellate Division should have set aside the finding of the Town Board. If *People ex rel. Gilson v. Gibbons* (231 N.Y. 171), relied upon by respondent, were accepted as holding the contrary, it

<sup>1</sup> The statute relating to suspensions and dismissals of employees, it appears, had not been complied with in the particular case)

would be inconsistent with *People ex rel. Guiney v. Valentine* (274 N.Y. 331) and *Matter of Roge v. Valentine* (280 N.Y. 268).

Another interesting case along the same lines was involved in *Matter of Murphy v. Valentine*, 284 N. Y., in which charges were filed against the petitioner, a police lieutenant, that he:

1. Did unlawfully receive and accept, in violation of § 306 of the Greater New York Charter, a certain sum of money from a civilian, as a fee, gift or emolument for service rendered or to be rendered in assisting the said civilian in the procurement of a license for the sale of alcoholic beverages;
2. Failed to take proper police action in connection with matter set forth in specification number one;
3. Failed to report to his Commanding Officer in connection with the matter set forth in specification number one.

Though acquitted upon the first specification, the petitioner has been found guilty upon the second and third specifications and was fined twenty days' pay. The determination of the Police Commissioner has been annulled on the ground that 'if the officer was found not guilty of receiving or accepting a sum of money he could not be found guilty of failing to take proper police action or making proper report in connection therewith.'

In reversing, the Appellate Court, (by a divided court) the majority stated:

There is room for argument that acquittal of the petitioner upon the charge of bribery would be inconsistent with his conviction upon a charge that he had failed to report to his commanding officer or to take police action in connection with the alleged bribe he is charged with accepting, but we must attribute to the officer of the police department who made the charges a perverted sense of humor if we construe specifications two and three as a charge that the police lieutenant had failed to report to his superior officers his own unfaithfulness and guilt. Specifications two and three refer to minor derelictions 'in connection with the matter set forth in charge one.' Those specifications can reasonably be understood to mean only that even if it be found that the police lieutenant did not accept the bribe as set forth in specification number one, 'in connection with the matter set forth in specification number one,' there were things said and done which called for police report and police action. Even though the trier of the facts rejected evidence which, if believed, would establish that a bribe had been offered and received, there would still remain substantial evidence that there was at least suggestion to the police lieutenant that a money reward would be given for police service desired and that the police lieutenant was guilty of a dereliction of duty in failing to report and to take proper police action upon such a criminal suggestion.

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# BOOK REVIEWS

EDITED BY JEAN CHARTERS

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**The Managerial Revolution.** James Burnham, The John Day Company, Inc., New York, 1941. 285p. \$2.50.

Where are we headed? What is to be the future of the society within which we live? What of the predictions from both the "Wheelberghs" and the interventionists that the entry of this country into the war will bring the end of democratic government? If so, what form of government will succeed the democratic capitalism of today? Do the old alternatives—socialism, communism, and fascism—provide the successor?

The author of this volume, James Burnham, a former Marxist and one-time follower of Trotsky, shows little hesitation in answering these questions. The war will result in the destruction of Great Britain. Russia will probably fall apart. Three hemispheric "super-states" will survive: a Germanic Europe and Africa, an Asiatic nation controlled by Japan, and the Western Hemisphere dominated by the United States. Each of these super-states will contain a new ruling class, new economic and political institutions and ideologies.

These are bold predictions, are they not? But there is more. The new society, in each nation, will be ruled by the "managers." These are the men who actually manage production, transportation, distribution, and governmental activities. The government will own the means of production, and public "managers," or public administrators, will occupy a particularly prominent place among the managerial elite. Rule by government bureaus, agencies, and commissions will, Mr. Burnham implies, resemble totalitarianism. This does not seem to alarm him although he suggests that here the managerial society may be attained "in a comparatively democratic fashion."

Mr. Burnham's theory is not new, although he has presented its fullest, as well as its most recent, expression. Traces of this theory are found, as other reviewers of his book have pointed out, in Veblen's description of the role of "production engineers." Max Nomad wrote of the prospective dominance of the "intellectuals." Alfred Bingham predicted that "the technical and managerial middle classes are slated to be next in the sequence of ruling classes." Lewis Corey has written of the growing importance of the "technical, administrative and managerial" groups.

Why will the managers, including the public administrators, suddenly assume this peculiar importance? The emergence of the manager, Mr. Burnham explains, accompanies the development of technological advance and large scale enterprise. There are, of course, numerous evidences of this trend. In private enterprise it is reflected by what Berle and Means describe as the "separation of ownership and control." In public enterprise it is reflected by the growing importance and recognition of administrative competence. Yet that these trends will ultimately result in a managerial state does not seem proven so easily. The only further proof cited is the description of society now in Germany, Japan, and in Stalin's Russia as that requiring managerial skills or administrative prowess.

Mr. Burnham writes with a pose of objectivity, an air of assurance, and reflects a high confidence in the conclusions he reaches. While public administrators may look forward eagerly to their elevation to the elite, this reviewer can not readily accept these conclusions. What ties or common interests bind the managers together as a group? While this group is rising to power what of the other groups in our society—organized manual and clerical

workers, for example? Will they accept or oppose the evolution of the managerial society? This volume leaves such pertinent questions as these unanswered. Yet all in all it is thought provoking and stimulating, if not convincing.

JOHN J. CORSON

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Social Security Board

**British Cities at War.** James L. Sundquist. American Municipal Association. Publication No. 76, Public Administration Service. Chicago. 1941. 110p. \$1.00.

**Cities and the National Defense Program.** Arnold Miles and Roy H. Owsley. Report 146, American Municipal Association. Chicago. 1941. 73p. \$1.00.

Local government administrators throughout the United States and Canada will be interested in both of these publications—one describing the experiences of municipalities in a country now at war, and the other dealing with the problems of our own country, which, though not at war, is engaged in a comprehensive national defense program. The trial and error period of England can be wisely used by local government officials in the United States to avoid the early mistakes made abroad.

*British Cities at War* contains a wealth of information concerning the many problems which British cities have faced in adapting the services of cities and counties to war conditions. It is interesting to note the rapidity with which the "grant-in-aid" policies and the supervision of local government functions by the national government have come into being. This report is particularly valuable because considerable attention to paid to the public reaction to measures affecting local government services which have been instituted by the central government.

At a glance, the reader will see that the scope of the report is wide, covering pre-raid and post-raid civil defense administration, the role of volunteer organizations, precautionary defense measures and air raid services, the relief of air raid victims, the institution of such special wartime activities as salvage, municipal farming, and municipal restaurants, as well as the normal municipal functions during the wartime period.

Although only a brief section is devoted to personnel problems, it must be recognized that personnel officers, by the very nature of their work, cannot be divorced from the whole picture of governmental activity. More specifically, however, there is a thorough discussion of the attempt to retain key men in the local government service in order to prevent them from being absorbed by the national government, as well as a general treatment of work-scheduling, compensation, and the adjustment of grievances. Personnel officers on this side of the Atlantic should note the urgent need for flexibility in time of war. If such misfortune ever strikes the United States, it behooves us now to provide the flexibility in our laws which would be necessary to meet conditions similar to those prevailing in England.

The second report, *Cities and the National Defense Program*, is complementary to the report on *British Cities at War*. In Part One, which deals with the early effects of the national defense program, there is a thorough treatment of the impact on local government personnel of the Selective Service and National Guard Acts. The second major division of the report describes the Ordinarily Affected City. Here is to be found a statement of what action is dependent upon state leadership, what action is to be taken on federal recommendation, and what action should be left to local initiative. For the worried local government official, there will be found in this section a statement of the methods that state and federal agencies employ in solving local defense problems, and an outline of the proper procedures to be followed in gaining assistance from these agencies. The discussion of action to be taken on local initiative should prove helpful and suggestive to local personnel officials in devising in-service training programs.

The third major section of the report deals with the Defense Connected City. Here there are discussed the problems of urban centers, of which San Diego is typical, that have experienced an overnight expansion caused by the development of military encampments, national defense industries, and naval or air bases. The final section attempts to look ahead to the measures that will be necessary for the intelligent handling of finance, law enforcement, housing, welfare facilities, personnel, and post-emergency planning.



*Cities and the National Defense Program* is extremely well done and would serve as a convenient manual for local governmental officials who are faced with the many problems incident to the present day. The findings are well supported by tables, figures, and appendices.

In summing up these studies, it should be said that they both disclose the serious problems facing local governments throughout the United States. These reports will be of invaluable aid to the local government officer who is attempting to solve the problems of expanded effort to meet the complexities of national defense.

WILLIAM W. SHAW

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**Merit System Installation.** Problems and Procedures in Establishing a Public Personnel Agency. Public Administration Service. Chicago. 1941. 58p. \$1.50.

It is a pleasure to commend to the readers of the Review this handbook, in the preparation of which a number of experts in personnel administration had a hand. In the process of passing under the scrutiny of many "experienced eyes," and shedding off superfluities, it gathered by accretion the best that has been learned in the actual process of installing merit systems in various parts of the country.

In the stimulating foreword, Maxwell A. DeVoe points out that "Obviously . . . this monograph does not profess to offer a complete set of formulae which will be applicable to all situations. Neither is it intended as a detailed manual covering the technical fields of continuing operation. The framework is provided, however, for meeting the principal problems of administration and the way is pointed to making such adaptations as may be necessary to meet special circumstances."

This handbook contains excellent advice, sometimes stated in general terms, but specific enough at least to suggest sound procedure at every important step in the installation process. At points there may be some disagreement over minor details regarding sequence of processes during installation of a system, such as beginning the examination program in advance of adoption of the classification plan; but the general pattern is obviously one of logical procedures.

The first nine chapters are devoted entirely to problems of installation. The concise treatment of the many situations which are certain to be faced during the formative period of a merit system in any agency—large or small—is amazing. The examples are not perfunctory. The diary of a new director during the first year and a half in an agency might well have supplied the outline.

Chapter Ten is a terse statement regarding the operation of the personnel agency, with subtle, almost poignant, warning to the director who takes too lightly the importance of giving constant attention to various vital phases of the whole personnel program.

Chapter Eleven—the conclusion—is a summing up, with certain admissions and vague evaluations as "it has been necessary to omit certain details of procedure. It has been assumed that the reader's fund of personal experience will plug these acknowledged gaps," and "no text can hope to substitute for analysis, planning, ingenuity, and skill"; but the director is told forthright certain things that he *must* do.

Three appendices, furnishing an excellent bibliography, a suggested list of furniture, equipment, and supplies, and suggested model transaction forms, should be useful reference material to have at hand at all times.

I. J. BROWDER

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**Job Evaluation and Merit Rating.** Eugene J. Bengé. National Foremen's Institute, Inc. New York. 1941. 103p. \$7.50.

Published in manual form, this book is designed to provide a fair and defensible basis for the establishment of wage rates and stimulation of employee hope for higher earnings through the "factor comparison" method of job evaluation and the "man-job" service rating. It is drawn from, and addressed to, private industry.

The emphasis of the manual is upon the individual job, its evaluation and salary determination, its filling by recruitment or in-service change, and the merit rating of its incumbent. This is in contrast to public service job evaluation which is essentially a part of the classification process, the grouping of similar jobs to facilitate common and equitable treatment.

In Mr. Bengé's discussion, one of the last steps in the evaluation process involves comparisons of similar trade jobs, such as drill press operators, to see if different rates are justified for specific positions. In the public service the comparison and grouping would generally be made before salary problems are introduced. Which is the proper approach may remain a moot question. The views are not passive opposites; they clash, and therefore should provoke analysis.

"Factor comparison," as the term is used in the manual, involves determination of the relative ranking of each job in the company by averaging individual judgments of job rankings in five factors, namely, mental requirements, skill, physical requirements, responsibilities, and working conditions. Evaluations are based on individual job specifications subdivided so as to facilitate comparison of the jobs on the basis of these same factors. Discussion of the procedures of job evaluation, out of which finally evolves the specification, introduces little that is new. Judgments of job rankings on the basis of these specifications are to be made, however, not necessarily by the analyst but by an evaluation committee, possibly composed of a management consultant and two representatives each of management and labor. A "key job comparison scale," consisting of ranking a sample group of jobs in terms of the importance of each of the five factors, is the heart of the method. Judgments are averaged to yield the final job rankings. The next step is to distribute the existing wage rates of the sample group of jobs over the five factor columns; that is, estimates are made of how much of the wage rate for a particular job is being paid for mental requirements, how much for skill, and so forth. The object of this step is to price the rankings of the five factors in terms of the present pay schedule, and to suggest changes in rankings if it is felt that the money allocation more correctly represents the job standing. The final wage rankings are then to be checked for cost of payroll application, for the comparison of jobs by crafts mentioned previously, and for availability of labor. Finally, rules for installing and administering the wage plan are discussed.

There is no need here to discuss divergent views regarding procedures and forms used. Far too much space is already devoted to this

sort of expression in the personnel field. The consistent and generally successful attempt to reduce jobs to their simplest elements should be commended, irrespective of factors used or the graphic or written form presented. The system has the positive benefit of assuring consideration of each element of a job in all transactions. It should be observed, however, that the system might be subject to criticism on two of the points the author makes against numerical ratings in job evaluations—namely, it is assumed that each job is composed of only the factors established for rating purposes, and it sets up seeming refinements which are not represented in the judgments made by use of them.

The procedure outlined in the manual establishes job evaluation and wage setting as one process. This may be more easily accomplished with equity when the governing concept is the *job* rather than the *class*, although in many cases illustrated in the manual existing wage rates influenced the judgments of the committee regarding the five factors. Salary factors introduce several considerations which should not ordinarily play a part in ranking jobs for their difficulty and responsibility. Moreover, the system places employees at a disadvantage regarding the factors on which to base their cases for wage adjustments. Employee confusion may save the analyst from demands on his time, and may possibly enhance his prestige, but it is not conducive to good employee morale or to satisfactory operation of the system.

The "man-job" service rating matches each employee against his particular job, using the individual job specification as a scale of reference. The same specification is used for all personnel processes; requisitioning an employee, promoting, transferring or training employees, performance ratings, and participation in bonus or profit sharing. This positive tie-in of the job specification to every phase of the personnel program is to be commended. In merit ratings, from one to six points are assigned each item listed in the five factor columns of the specification and the score is computed by one of several possible statistical methods. The author questions the adequacy of all measuring devices applied to merit rating, and urges qualitative rather than quantitative matching in order that merit ratings

may "be a servant of judgment, not its master."

Mr. Bengé is to be congratulated for courage, though possibly questioned as a prophet, for passing over collective bargaining as a method of wage determination, and forthrightly supporting Taylor's thesis of determining job worth by work analysis.

MERRILL J. COLLETT

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**Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies.**

A report submitted to the Civil Service Assembly of the United States and Canada by The Committee on Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies. William E. Mosher, Chairman. Civil Service Assembly. Chicago. 1941. 259p. \$2.50.

Whoever it was that first said "There is nothing new under the sun" could not have meant that there are not new ways of putting the same old things together. *Public Relations of Public Personnel Agencies*, the second book to come off the press in the series of books on policies and practices in public personnel administration, published by the Civil Service Assembly, may not contain any startling new ideas; but it does put many old ideas together in new ways. The book is particularly timely and significant because of the critical problem that democracies face today in maintaining themselves and in preventing the encroachment of totalitarian idealism. The book is an example, in itself, of one of the essential democratic processes. In the introductory pages, we find "The ultimate test of success and the ultimate guarantee of permanency of democratic government are to be found in the approval of its citizenry. For this approval, not only must the service be adequate and satisfactory, but information as to government activities must be widely disseminated and citizen interest aroused. On the whole, public authorities have signally failed to keep their 'masters,' the public, acquainted with their enterprises and the problems for which they are responsible. This generalization applies with few qualifications to the divisions specially charged with personnel functions." And again in the conclusion we find the following language: "It is the function of public relations (1) to make the public aware of what the government is doing in terms which the public can understand, and

(2) to make governmental officials aware of what the public's response is to the service rendered. This program calls for what has been termed 'the two-way street.' It involves, on the one hand, continuous understanding on the part of the personnel agency, and, on the other, continuous criticism on the part of the public. Only through such a mutual exchange can government be maintained on a truly democratic basis and the dangers of a self-sufficient bureaucracy be avoided."

A broad definition of public relations is set forth as follows: Public relations have to do with the development and maintenance by any legitimate means of favorable attitudes on the part of the people with whom an agency comes into contact. If we accept this rather broad definition, we cannot find fault with the broad treatment given the subject in this book. It includes about everything but the kitchen sink, and even that may be lurking in one or another of the four or five appendices. In spite of a vague sort of apology for its wide scope which the conclusion of the book, itself, contains, there is some use and some reason to justify each and every chapter if the total field of public personnel administration is to be considered.

The Committee which produced the book does not lack talented and experienced men both in the academic and practical field of public relations. Headed by Dr. William E. Mosher, Dean of the Maxwell School of Citizenship, at Syracuse University, it includes such men as H. Eliot Kaplan, Secretary of the National Civil Service Reform League; Clarence Ridley, of the International City Managers' Association; Carl J. Friedrich, of Harvard University; and Roy F. Hendricksen, Personnel Director of the United States Department of Agriculture.

The report of the Committee deals with the relationships of governmental personnel agencies with the general public, legislatures, chief executives and other administrative officials, with civic organizations and pressure groups, and with schools and colleges. It discusses various means and methods of making effective contacts, such as good reporting, the use of publication, the press, the radio, the motion picture, public speaking, photography, and exhibitions. It is somewhat surprising, in view of the thoroughness of its treatment, that in re-

viewing the possibilities of motion pictures the most significant effort at public relations through that medium, "Merit System Advancing," a film produced by the Municipal Civil Service Commission of New York City, seems to have escaped mention.

It may generally be said that newly established public personnel agencies need to watch their public relations more carefully than most of the older ones. Yet when one tries to point to any agency, new or old, that does a particularly good job on all phases of its public relations, in what direction can one point? This is probably not through lack of any desire on the part of the agencies. Lack of adequate appropriation is, no doubt, the chief reason for the failure of most agencies to devote adequate attention to the public relations problem. As a help in securing adequate financing of all of the functions of personnel agencies, the report contains a sensible, although more or less incidental, discussion of the treatment to be accorded to legislators, and particularly to appropriation committees.

The material is well organized and interestingly presented. The Assembly is particularly to be congratulated on the selection of an excellent format for the series.

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#### **How to Select and Direct the Office Staff.**

E. A. Richards and E. B. Rubin. Harper & Brothers. New York. 1941. 175p. \$2.50.

The purpose of the book is to provide a manual for everyone who hires office employees, but particularly for the "average business man" whose business is not large enough to warrant the establishment of a specialized personnel department. In general, *How to Select and Direct the Office Staff* deals with three broad phases of personnel administration—job analysis and classification, recruitment, and general policies and practices to be used in directing a staff of office employees. The treatment of each of these phases is very brief.

Job analysis and job description activities are emphasized only as such activities are of use in the recruitment processes. Stress is laid on the necessity for knowing "the jobs" and the requirements necessary for their performance before attempts are made to select people

to fill the jobs. Although specific steps are given for preparing the job classification, the author fails to indicate the particular techniques to be used in analyzing the jobs and in arriving at the standards for each class of work.

In the chapters dealing with the hiring process, the discussion centers around the use of various tools and techniques, such as the preparation and use of the application blank, the use of tests and interpretation of results, and the use of the employment interview. The points raised in connection with the application blank seem to be well taken; however, the reviewer feels that the treatment given to the use of tests and the interpretation of test results is far too limited to prevent the pitfalls facing a testing program which is placed in unskilled hands. There is a danger that one inexperienced in the use of tests will be led to believe that by using tests in the selection process he will solve all his employment problems. In other words, too much stress is laid on the advantage of using objective tests for employing personnel, and insufficient attention is given to the limitations of such tests. Although the discussion of the interview as an employment technique points out that the interview must be organized and planned, it fails to point out the limitations of interviews as selective tools.

The chapters dealing with practices and policies to be used in directing office personnel after their selection seem to be more thoroughly grounded and not so apt to be misinterpreted. In these chapters the authors discuss the necessity for setting standard wage scales on a level with or above prevailing rates. The opinion is given that, within salary ranges, advancements should not be given for meritorious service but rather should be based entirely upon seniority factors. This, of course, is a controversial issue, but no mention is made that any other opinions on methods of adjusting salaries within ranges even exist. The advantages of standard vacation and sick leave regulations, credit unions, employee activities, grievance committees, and the like are discussed at some length.

The book may answer its purpose of serving as a manual for the average business man, but it is of little value to the personnel administrator. There is some danger that it will be accepted by an inexperienced employer as the



"open sesame" to the solution of all his personnel problems. It is a well written book using a popular approach that will be understandable to even the most inexperienced in personnel management. If it serves as a stimulus for further study and investigation of the subjects covered in a rather brief and cursory manner, it may well be of value to the person faced with the necessity of hiring office personnel who does not have the services of an organized personnel department at his disposal.

ROBERT D. STOVER

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**Protecting Plant Manpower.** Special Bulletin No. 3, Division of Labor Standards, U. S. Department of Labor. Washington, D.C. 1941. 70p.

This book is an amplification of a pamphlet entitled *Safeguarding Manpower for Greater Production* which was issued on behalf of the National Committee for Conservation of Manpower in Defense Industries. It is full of practical suggestions which are all important in industrial sanitation and hygiene. The contents include such subjects as fatigue, criteria of industrial health hazards, preventive measures, heating, ventilation and cooling of work places, personal respiratory protection, personal service conveniences, industrial health programs for the small plant, illumination, and noise. The various chapters have been prepared by recognized national authorities in their respective fields.

From a practical and informative standpoint each writer has covered his subject with the object of describing outstanding hazards as well as making timely specific suggestions for their control. The hazards pointed out are well known, the methods put forth are not new, and the suggested techniques have all been well tested and time-tried. There are many, however, who will find the various subjects particularly interesting if they think of them in terms of their own plants or services, large or small, where no health programs have been undertaken.

Those in the public personnel field who have the responsibility for working conditions, health, safety and accident prevention programs, and the welfare of the employees within their respective services will be particularly in-

terested in, and should read, the chapters by Leonard Greenburg, M.D. on "Industrial Health Programs for the Small Plant," and "Illumination" by J. S. Rogers. Dr. Greenburg stresses the importance of first aid to the injured, and of the proper kind of equipment. Pointing out that, where possible, first aid rooms with trained personnel in charge should be provided, he discusses the type of first aid to be furnished, its contents and care, the location of first-aid rooms, furnishings and arrangement, and the required equipment and supplies.

The chapter by J. S. Rogers on "Illumination" is practical in any office, shop, or plant, since proper illumination is essential if maximum production efficiency is to be assured. This section applies equally to public service personnel and the quarters in which they work. Poor lighting harms eyes and may affect the entire body. Uniform light distribution, general illumination, local illumination and natural light, are all discussed, and standards of illumination are recommended. Mr. Rogers has also included a chapter on covering the ill effects of direct and indirect noise, reduction of efficiency due to noise, isolation of noise, insulation of noise, sound absorption, and finally, the levels of sound. It is not difficult to apply his practical suggestions to public offices where for example, employees frequently are required to do highly concentrative work in the same room with bookkeeping machines and typewriters.

There never was a time in the history of our country when manpower was at a greater premium. National defense programs, both industrially and militarily, have demanded more and more men, until now the recruiting of qualified male personnel for the public service is becoming a difficult problem in many localities. It is imperative that public personnel agencies take a greater interest in the preservation of the manpower they now have by actively and aggressively carrying on a health, safety, and accident prevention program which will keep personnel at work continuously. From all indications, our continuation in the present national program will require us to keep older men on the job, and, undoubtedly, to raise age limits—all of which means greater risk from a health and safety standpoint. The public personnel agency which directs an in-

tensive health, safety, and accident prevention program, including first-aid training for all employees, is making a contribution to the public service and community which will pay big dividends for years to come.

RICHARD H. SMITH

Civil Service Board  
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**Trends in Industrial Pensions.** Murray W. Latimer and Karl Tufel. Industrial Relations Counselors. New York. 1940. x, 88p. \$1.00.

In this monograph are summarized the preliminary findings of a study of trends in industrial pensions undertaken by the Industrial Relations Counselors, Inc., with some emphasis on the problems created by the establishment in recent years of the national system under the Social Security Act, and a brief discussion of some of the steps taken by industry in the solution of those problems.

Earlier studies by this organization of the industrial pensions movement in the United States were reported in the year 1933, after a most thorough and exhaustive research in the field, and were embodied in a two-volume work by Murray W. Latimer, a co-author of this monograph. That excellent and authoritative work on the subject of industrial pensions traced the growth of the movement in this country since the beginning of large-scale industrial activity, and discussed the various factors which brought about the development of sound and progressive pension measures in industry. It is still widely used by students of pensions as an important and valuable source of information.

The present publication embraces a brief discussion of various phases of the industrial pension problem in the light of the widespread development of social insurance in recent years. Consisting of eighty-eight pages divided into thirteen chapters, it contains a review of such important topics as the relation of the private pension plan to the federal social security program, the essential characteristics of a modern and financially sound pension plan, the latest developments in the field of industrial pensions, the growth of the principle of investment of pension credits, and the effect of certain taxes on industrial pension programs.

*Trends in Industrial Pensions* is more comprehensive in scope than reports on similar

studies made by the National Industrial Conference Board in December, 1939 and July, 1940, which dealt for the most part with statistical data illustrating the effect of the Social Security Act on industrial pension systems. The conditions in which industrial systems found themselves in recent years as a result of the multiplicity of economic and social problems, and the measures taken in the solution of those problems, are presented in a simple and understandable form. One is impressed with the clarity of expression of the authors and the fine arrangement of the various topical divisions. It gives every indication of the same painstaking and thorough efforts that characterized the earlier publication, and should be favorably received by personnel administrators. The restatement of benefit provisions made by industry and the principles governing the determination of those provisions, represents one of the finest recent contributions on this important element of a modern pension plan. Those principles are well adaptable to retirement provisions for public employees.

The authors point out that the period from 1932 to 1938 was one of extraordinarily rapid growth in the industrial pension movement, due primarily to the impetus of the social security program, and discuss briefly modifications in existing plans occasioned by this development.

Most students of pensions will agree with the conclusions of the authors on the important part played by the Social Security Act in solving the problem of mobility of labor, and on the opinion expressed that the federal program, even if expanded beyond its present scope, would still fall short in making adequate retirement provision for a large number of industrial workers, proving that the sound retirement plan established by the employer is essential in industry as a supplement to the federal program and to meet definite personnel objectives.

Appendix I presents various classifications of industrial plans in operation, which should be found of interest to technical students, and Appendix II contains an excellent summary of the old age and survivors insurance provisions of the Social Security Act.

A. A. WEINBERG, C. P. A.

Park Employees' Annuity and Benefit Fund  
Chicago, Illinois

**Design for Industrial Co-ordination.** Robert W. Porter. Harper and Brothers. New York. 1941. 249p. \$3.00.

The author, who has been a management consultant for a number of years, outlines in this book his theory of the administrative pattern of industrial organization, and the factors which make for success or failure of an enterprise. In a discussion of the elements of industrial coordination, he concludes that:

(1) there is a technical design for industrial coordination; (2) the effectiveness of the design is dependent upon the inter-operation of twenty-one elements of performance; and, (3) the difference in results attained by various companies of similar characteristics depends on the skill with which the twenty-one elements of coordination are manipulated. These twenty-one elements which are common to all companies in all industries are as follows: policy, performance, and compensation; planning, production, and inspection; administration, management, and operation; communication, co-operation, and control; intellect, volition, and ethics; stimulation, application and discipline; and expectancy, efficiency, and economy.

**Modern Foremanship and Supervision under New Deal Legislation.** Harvey B. Rector and W. A. Rinckhoff. Law Research Service. Cincinnati, Ohio. 1940. 156p. \$4.50.

This is a short, concise manual outlining the practices which are prohibited under the National Labor Relations Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the Walsh-Healy Act. Designed for the use of foremen and other supervisory officials who are in day-to-day contact with the workers, the handbook is concerned primarily with the "don'ts" of the legislation as interpreted by administrators and the courts.

**The Government of Montgomery County, Maryland.** The Brookings Institution. Washington, D. C. 1941. 740p. \$3.50.

Growing out of a comprehensive survey made by The Brookings Institution at the request of the Board of Montgomery County (Maryland) Commissioners, a series of recommendations for administrative reorganization of that county have been published. The material on personnel was prepared by Lewis E.

Meriam, and a major section of the recommendations is devoted to the reorganization of the personnel system. The establishment of a non-partisan three member county civil service commission, to be elected for staggered six-year terms, and to serve without pay, is recommended. Detailed suggestions for provisions to be included in the personnel rules and regulations are also included.

**British Labor and the War.** Frieda Wunderlich. Supplement III, Social Research. New York School for Social Research. New York. 1941. 67p. \$.40.

Changes in the recruitment, allocation, and status of labor since the outbreak of the war until mid-January, 1941, are discussed. Stating that it is evident that the problem of industrial manpower has not been tackled on the same lines as the problem of military power, the author points out that the government relies on persuasion, good will, and indirect pressure, rather than compulsion, for effecting its labor policies. Compulsion can scarcely be avoided, she states, if war drags on, since the supply of labor power needs the same careful planning as fighting power. For the most part, wages have gone up due to a shortage of labor, a rising cost of living, and collective bargaining. The movement in hours of work has been towards an increase from the pre-war 40 to 50 hour work week to a 70 to 80 hour work week at the outset of the war. However, the trend swung back again to a 50 to 60 hour schedule as the war progressed and the need was evidenced for easing the strain on the workers. Considerable light is thrown on the new working conditions of labor in England during the war.

**The War-Time Wage Policy of the Dominion Government.** Bulletin No. 5. Industrial Relations Section, Queen's University. Kingston, Ontario. 1941. 161p. \$.50.

No attempt is made in this pamphlet to deal with the general problem of wage control in war time; but the object is rather to interpret the particular wage policy laid down by the Dominion Government, to point out certain difficulties in its interpretation, and to reach some general conclusion regarding its effectiveness. The wage policy which is the focus of dis-

cussion was an Order in Council issued on December 16, 1940, for the purpose of laying down principles for the guidance of Boards of Conciliation and Investigation set up under the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act as amended in 1925. The aims of the order were to preserve the basic wage rates existing in December, 1940 and to add to these "standard" wage rates from time to time "a bonus calculated to protect the worker against increases in the cost of the basic necessities of life."

**The Fields of Personnel Work.** John G. Darley and Ralph F. Berdie. Occupational Monograph No. 20. Science Research Associates. Chicago. 48p. \$.50.

Directed toward an audience at the high school level, this monograph presents a brief general introduction to the fields of educational, industrial, and governmental personnel work as career possibilities. The breadth of its scope and the need for simplicity of presentation results in generalizations that are supported by few details. Emphasis is placed upon the more popular conceptions of personnel work. Information on training requirements, earnings, and career opportunities is included.

**The Skills of the Beginning Case Worker.** Florence Hollis, Lucia B. Clow, and a Study Committee. Family Welfare Association of America. New York. 1941. 30p. \$.30.

In the first section of this publication, Miss Hollis, who is Assistant Professor of Family Case Work at Western Reserve University, evaluates the subject from the standpoint of the school in a paper entitled, "A Study of the Case Work Performance of Graduates as a Measure of the Effectiveness of Professional Training." Miss Clow, Associate Secretary of the Family Welfare Association of Milwaukee, discusses what an agency expects of a first-year worker. Finally, a study committee of ten first-year case workers from two St. Louis social work agencies presents a report on "What the Case Worker Expects From His Professional Education and from the Agency Program on His First Job." These three points of view have been blended into a well-rounded discussion of desirable qualifications and training of a social case worker from the standpoint of the profession itself.

**Proceedings of the Educational Research Forum.** International Business Machines Corporation. New York. 1941. 127p.

For six days in August, 1940, the International Business Machines Corporation sponsored a forum in Endicott, New York, for the purpose of bringing together a group of experts who have pioneered in the development of machine methods in educational and psychological research. The fourteen papers which were read at the forum, and which are published in this volume of *Proceedings*, include, among others: "The Computation of Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations by the Tabulator When the Numbers Are Both Positive and Negative," by Jack W. Dunlap; "Four Aspects of Factor Analysis," by Harry W. Harman; "Computing Difficulty Index and Validity Index in Item Analysis by Electric Accounting Machines," by John W. Stalnaker; and "Item Analysis by Test Scoring Machine Graphic Item Counter," by John C. Flanagan.

**Hours Administration As Influenced by the Defense Program.** Edward P. Moore. Industrial Relations Section, Princeton University. Princeton, New Jersey. 1941. 40p. \$1.00.

The Industrial Relations Section of Princeton University prepared this memorandum for executives in government, industry, and the labor movement who are faced with the problem of maximizing defense production. It is aimed to give persons with limited time a digest and summary of current practical experience with regard to hours of work in the single-shift operation, factors determining changes to multiple shift, types of multiple shift schedules, problems in arrangement of shifts, hour schedules for special groups, and union attitudes toward these questions. A selected list of references is appended to the memorandum.

**Industrial Relations in a Defense Economy.** Harold F. North, Leo Wolman, Robert B. Wolf, and Morgan R. Mooney. Personnel Series No. 48. American Management Association. New York. 1941. 43p.

The following four papers presented at the 1941 Personnel Conference of the American Management Association are included: "Industrial Relations in a Defense Economy," by



Harold F. North, Industrial Relations Manager, Swift and Company; "Trends in the Labor Movement," by Leo Wolman, Professor of Economics, Columbia University; "Practical Management-Labor Cooperation," by Robert

B. Wolf, Manager, Pulp Division, Weyerhaeuser Timber Company; and "Conciliation: A Defense 'Must'," by Morgan R. Mooney, Deputy Commissioner of Labor, Connecticut State Department of Labor and Factory Inspection.

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# ARTICLE ABSTRACTS

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## PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION— GENERAL ASPECTS

110. Benning, H. F., M. A. **Personnel management. Scope and general principles.** *Pub. Administration* III (I) Mar. 1941: 7-27.—Successful operation of large scale organizations depends upon the interweaving of man power and motive power, of men and machines, of men and material, and of men and money. The services of persons with special training are secured to assist management in dealing with legal, technical, and financial problems, and modern management has included in its staff organization, officers in charge of personnel departments. Managers, supervisors, and foremen need have no fear that the setting up of these departments means that their essential functions as supervisors will be taken away from them. The responsibility for initiating inquiries concerning personnel policies is not wholly one for the personnel department. The centralization of all personnel records in the personnel department facilitates the preparation of analyses, reports, and data concerning employees at regular intervals. Training is necessary in every large organization whether or not a personnel department is set up; but such departments can contribute towards the organization and coordination of training programs by providing staff supervision in the systematization, development, and extension of such programs. The personnel department is usually the administrative link between top management and the work force. It can do an effective job in the area of welfare, social, and recreational activities by acting as a facilitating agent, by encouraging the sponsors of these movements, by coordinating these activities and keeping itself in the background. After employees have been engaged it is necessary in large organizations to provide facilities for medical examinations as required and at least a first aid center for the treatment of minor ailments. Whether an operating or staff unit or personnel department is made responsible for physical working conditions, the necessity for collaboration is obvious. In many organizations it is not possible to set up a separate department to handle all these

personal matters and their control is the part-time duty of some line officer, usually the accountant or secretary. However, in large-scale organizations these functions are much more than a part-time activity. It involves the employment of a skilled staff, the size and nature of which vary according to the attitude of management to personnel problems.—*Louis Hosch.*

111. Powell, Norman J. **Personnel administration in New York City.** *Personnel Administration* 3 (9) May 1941: 1-5.—This article, the initial of a series concerning the second largest civil service commission in the country, describes the organization of the commission and outlines the functions of its bureaus. Within the past few years the New York City Civil Service Commission has reorganized its work routines, modified its objectives and redistributed its emphases, adopting a more positive attitude toward the problems of personnel administration. Today, in addition to examinations, its functions include recruitment, service ratings, research, training, and like central public personnel activities. Limited by rule, law, and budget, its activities do not include employee relations or intra-departmental health and welfare regulations. The head of the civil service department is the Commission, consisting of a President and two Commissioners. The Commission acts as a board in the consideration of quasi-judicial and quasi-legislative matters. For the purpose, however, of efficient internal administration of the department's activities the present Commission has defined individual functions for each of the Commissioners. One Commissioner, the Secretary to the Commission, and an administrative assistant, make up an administrative board which has control over such matters as office management and procedure, budgetary matters and policies, review of periodic reports of bureaus and units, and general supervision over special Commission projects. The Commission's activities have been grouped functionally into nine bureaus: (1) Administration, (2) Application and Notification, (3) Certification, (4) Examination, including a classification unit, (5) Information and Recruitment, (6) Investigation, (7) Payroll Audit,

(8) Service Rating, and (9) Training and Research. The extent of participation by operating departments in Commission activities varies with the authority and responsibility involved in the function concerned. The departments will participate in such functions as training or the determination of job requirements. However, in order to maintain the integrity and strict secrecy of examinations, no employee or officer of any of the operating agencies participates in the preparation or rating of test questions.—*William A. Grelle.*

112. Roberts, Frank L. and Hill, Byron. **The merit system in relationship to public health personnel.** *Am. J. of Public Health* 31 (2) February, 1941: 121-126. —Government on the basis of personality and/or political influence with all the attendant evils of the patronage system culminated in Great Britain in the reign of George III. The founders of this nation, however, clearly intended administrative officers to hold office during good behavior and such was the situation during the early years of our government. In 1820, however, the legislative basis for the spoils system was laid in the passage of the Four Year Term Tenure of Office Act and the era of spoils and corruption which ensued reached an ugly climax in the assassination of President Garfield in 1881 at the hands of a disappointed office seeker. This act was followed by the beginning of a civil service reform movement which had its most pronounced effect in the periods of 1883-1884, 1905-1915 and from 1936 to the present. Public health has not escaped its time serving as a football of politics, but the special training requirements of modern public health techniques have kept public health in recent years from being too greatly exploited for political patronage. The merit system can and will aid greatly in encouraging properly trained personnel to enter the service and it will keep out the unfit. The first civil service examinations in Tennessee given by the reorganized Department of Personnel created by the Public Acts of 1939, were for the technical positions in public health. This involved 5 groups of positions and 36 technical classifications. In addition to the written examinations, oral interviews were given by four different examining boards for medical and dental personnel, nurses, laboratory technicians, and sanitary engineers. Ninety-four percent of the examinations taken were passed, though many persons could not compete because of the high training and experience requirements. Among the lessons taught by these examinations are the following: (1) the public must be educated to the machinery and genuineness of civil service; (2) procedures required of applicants should be reasonable; (3) considerable care should be given to the type and content of examinations; (4) considerable time should be allowed for receiving applications; (5) in the field

of public health it is best not to set up state residence requirements; (6) examining boards should be trained in the particular fields in regard to which they are to give service.—*Jack H. Foster.*

113. Rogers, Lindsay. **The staffing of Congress.** *Political Science Q.* 56 (1) March 1941: 1-22.—Little attention has yet been paid, even by Congress, to the cost, numbers, duties, and potentialities of the enlarging Congressional staff which now totals about 3,200 persons. Some interest, however, was evidenced during the last Congress by the passage of a bill to give civil service status to certain Congressional clerks. The staffing of most clerical and technical positions, however, is on a patronage basis. One exception is the Office of Legislative Counsel which was belatedly established in 1918 to provide Congress the services of well-trained legal draftsmen. Appointments are made by the Speaker and the Vice-President but they rarely do more than approve nominations made by the Office itself, and patronage is barred. Each Senator and Representative selects his own office force, and committee staffs are chosen by the committee chairman. Although there are a few striking examples of expert staffing and long tenure, the positions attached to most committees are contingent upon political vicissitudes. The transfer of clerks from one committee to another is rare and vacancies must frequently be filled from the outside by inexperienced persons. Congress sometimes authorizes salary increases for "present incumbents" of committee clerkships, but few clerks can expect to earn more than \$3900. Were Congress to undertake a position classification of its committee staffs, it would find the task difficult because of the wide variations in the relative importance and jurisdiction of the committees. Some staffs exercise influence, expertness, and even policy-determination. Others perform quasi-administrative tasks; some involve much public relations work, and others do research and prepare reports. A survey of the most important members of the Congressional staff today would probably find that most are under forty years of age. Many got into Congressional clerkships by way of civilian clerkships, some, from posts in the executive departments, and a few are ex-lawyers. More than half of these Congressional clerks have had some college training, and many are now studying law.—*Frederick C. Mosher.*

114. Sims, Lewis B. **Professional personnel in the federal government.** *Pub. Administration Rev.* 1 (3) Spring, 1941: 271-280.—The professional employees in government received little attention from American students of public administration until the President appointed the Committee on Civil Service Improvement. For the Reed Committee the author made a detailed study of all professional personnel

appointed to junior level (\$2,000) positions in the federal service during the period January, 1935, through March, 1939. Junior professional positions require graduation from a recognized college or university. In the period covered, 5,190 such appointees were initially inducted into the federal service. Engineers account for almost two-fifths of all appointees. Fewer persons received their appointments through competitive civil service examinations than through the noncompetitive methods of selection because these were years affected by the "emergency" program. In the case of both competitive and noncompetitive appointees, the Department of Agriculture was distinctly dominant, accounting for more competitive appointments than all the other departments and independent establishments combined. Commerce and Interior were next in importance. The universities and colleges that have been supplying the junior professional personnel do not, on the whole, include the most prominent private educational institutions. Large state universities tend, however, to be important sources of federal personnel. University of California and University of Minnesota are tied for first on the list, while Iowa State College, University of Illinois, Pennsylvania State College, University of Michigan, and Oregon State College follow in that order. Almost as many appointees have come from institutions west of the Mississippi River as have come from those east of the Mississippi. In the supply of noncompetitive junior attorneys Harvard is outstanding, followed by George Washington, Columbia, and Georgetown. Engineers come from schools in every state of the Union. The College of the City of New York is unrivaled for first place. Social scientists in the federal government are primarily economists, social service researchers, and statisticians, although a few are sociologists and a few belong to the growing profession of administrative analysis. Such appointees came from 166 institutions. Eastern institutions tend to be the chief sources for government social scientists, but not to the same extent as for the attorneys. Contrary to the current notion, the federal government is securing as junior level employees in the professional field men and women who rank high in scholarship. Twenty-nine per cent of the junior professional employees stood in the top fifth of their graduating classes, whereas only 12 per cent stood in the bottom fifth. Junior professional employees appointed through the competitive system are better scholastically than those appointed outside of the system. Thirty-five per cent of the competitive appointees stood in the top fifth as contrasted with only 23 per cent of the noncompetitive. At the other end of the scale, only 10 per cent of the competitive appointees were found to be in the bottom fifth as contrasted with 15 per cent of the noncompetitive appointees. On the basis of scholastic records of their junior professional appointees, the principal federal

agencies rank—from best to poorest—as follows: Securities and Exchange Commission, Treasury, Commerce, Navy, Interior, War, Agriculture, and the Public Works Administration. The five better professional groups in scholastic quality are social scientists, attorneys, physical scientists, patent examiners, and biological scientists; the five poorer groups—soil specialists, architects, engineers, range examiners, and foresters. The high quality of recruitment of social scientists is due, no doubt, to the more challenging type of professional work now available in the government service, resulting from governmental assumption of newer responsibilities along social and economic lines. (Includes twelve tables, maps, and charts.)—*Edgar B. Young.*

115. Stoke, Harold W. *Executive leadership and the growth of propaganda.* *Am. Political Science Rev.* 35 (3) June 1941: 490-500.—The traditional view of government as a servant of the people, whose will is expressed through its elected representatives, is yielding before the increased dependence of Congress upon administrative initiative and guidance in law-making. Not only does the bureaucracy initiate many of the most important laws, but Congress, through its passage of general and permissive acts, delegates to the executive wide areas of legislative discretion. One major reason for this trend is the necessity of speedy action to meet rapidly changing conditions, impossible through traditional legislative procedures. One major result is that the executive who determines policies and initiates actions must develop machinery to gain public support for his decisions after the action has been taken. Such support is absolutely essential in a democracy and scarcely less so in a dictatorship. Governmental publicity and techniques of persuasion thus become indispensable instruments to the executive in effectuating his administrative program. Illustrative was the campaign to popularize the NRA, which was initiated with little warning or discussion and was primarily of administrative origin. The tremendous publicity program carried on by the Department of Agriculture to gain support for its farm program is another example. The federal agencies with the most active publicity organizations are those with new programs which must be explained and promoted before they can be administered. Under a system of executive initiative in policy determination, government by consent becomes a process of manufacturing consent for what has been done. The American public is not as alarmed at this development as its antipathy toward propaganda would lead one to expect, partly because of the growing fatalistic feeling that the logic of events allows little political choice, and partly because few realize the extent to which they are controlled by propaganda while they are under its influence.—*Frederick C. Mosher.*



116. Underhill, H. Fabian. **Economist views personnel practices.** *Personnel J.* 19 (7) January, 1941: 263-66.—Since peacetime economy is permeated with inefficiency and waste, the author of this article examines the problem of placing a given output in the hands of consumers in war time with less expenditure of productive and distributive resources than before the war. Economists have long maintained that under competitive conditions the best way in which labor might increase wages was by increasing its productivity, that management's best method of increasing net returns was to cut cost per unit—preferably by increasing productivity. They have condemned attempts to increase income by monopolistic practices. The economist is not generally equipped to dwell with human or psychological elements manifested by modern personnel management, but examines the methods used to keep the worker satisfied to ascertain their possible effects on the economy as a whole. To an employer, wages are frequently the most immediate problem to be met. The straight piece rate, if properly set to award the worker the marginal productivity of the group, is economically acceptable. Business finds it more difficult to anticipate the unit cost of production in the time payment type of wage system, and it is harder for the economist to determine whether workers are obtaining a wage equivalent to their marginal productivity. This does not economically invalidate this method of payment. Employers and employees have argued at each other over the restriction of output. Where such restriction is instituted by an employer in an attempt to spread seasonal work over a longer period, the economist will commend the procedure, but if used in order to maintain or raise prices, the practice measured by economic criterion is obviously unsound. An employer's attempts to restrict output, regardless of his purpose, is likely to be met by a corresponding restriction on the part of the workers. This is purely a defense reaction. The employer should take prior action to prevent this by means of adequate assurance that the workers' income for the period will not be less if the production is more rapidly achieved. The restriction of output by workers in the hope of forcing the employment of more men may finally result in a reduction of the amount of the product demanded, and may thus in the long run curtail rather than expand employment. In general it may be said that while the motives for restricted output may be readily understood, the practice must be condemned unless undertaken for stabilization with the cooperation of both employers and employees. The economist may note with approval the development of the practice of paying workers adequately for worthwhile suggestions. It may be that an economist's criticisms of the methods used in personnel work are unjustified. Personnel administration looks at

the matter from the viewpoint of the individual firm and its welfare whereas the economist is supposed to view the whole economy with special reference to the maximum satisfaction that may be afforded to the consumers.—*Harry Albert.*

117. Unsigned. **The civil service in the British Isles.** *Civil Service Review* 14 (1) March, 1941: 7-8.—The heavy blows dealt at London during recent weeks have a special significance for civil servants, for one of the enemy's objectives is the complete disruption of governmental administration at the center. The civil service has already taken steps to offset the inroads on the working day caused by air-raid warnings and by traffic dislocation. Arrangements are being made for a rota system of attendance at public offices so that, in buildings with adequate shelters, staffs may sleep overnight and thus be enabled to give maximum effective attendance. Another wartime measure is the introduction of a new system of compulsory deduction of income tax from salaries of civil servants. Special regulations governing the adjustment of working hours to make up for lost time and the calculation of overtime pay have recently been issued. For example, time lost by late arrival owing to air-raid warnings or traffic difficulties is not reckoned as official attendance for the purpose of calculating overtime payments; but when an officer is prevented from attending because his house is demolished or severely damaged by enemy action, he may be granted one or two days of "compassionate leave with pay," carrying credit for the purpose of overtime calculation.—*Elton D. Woolpert.*

118. Unsigned. **A survey of personnel practices of state highway departments.** *Better Roads* 11 (2) February, 1941: 19-23, 34-36.—A survey by *Better Roads* during the latter part of 1940 sought to find the answers to thirty-four questions on formal personnel practices in state highway departments. The presence or absence of a formal civil service system does not necessarily indicate the excellence of personnel practices, and there can be no doubt that the practices in many states without merit systems are on a level with those in states having merit systems. Of 135,000 employees in forty-three comparable states only 25.4 per cent are under a formal merit system. As an example of the operations of a civil service system for state highway departments, New York has three divisions in its classified service: the exempt class, the competitive class and the non-competitive class, which is largely made up of skilled mechanics and machine operators whom it might be impractical to test by ordinary means. All employees, including the Commissioner, are under civil service; the rule of three prevails; promotions are by examination; discharged employees may appeal to the Commission but the Commission cannot force the employing agency to rehire the discharged

employee. Eighteen large counties in New York are under civil service laws administered by the state, and all county superintendents of highways are under civil service. In nine of the nineteen states which have formal merit systems for highway employees, regular laborers are not under the merit system, and temporary laborers are exempt in two. It is usual practice for the chief executive and commission members to be exempt from merit system requirements. Twelve of the merit system states hold competitive examinations for all vacancies above the common labor level. Oregon uses a unique method in examining applicants. Six rating schedules are used to rate (1) personal character and integrity, (2) education and experience, (3) points for service, (4) service training advancement, (5) post-graduate educational training, and (6) executive and administrative capabilities. A personnel rating board rates the application and other data and gives the applicant a composite rating which establishes his position on the eligible list. Of the seventeen state highway departments reporting on the practice of certification, nine provide for three names, three permit only one, and one permits five. The practice varies in four other states. Twenty-three departments require a probationary period before making appointments final, twelve do not, and five do "sometimes." Probation periods vary from thirty days to six months or more. The average district or division head has been with his department 15½ years and the average principal department head 16 years. The final appointing authority is extremely variable, in Pennsylvania and Nebraska the governor being the final appointing officer, and in only one state the personnel board. Although in thirty-seven departments laborers may be discharged by the worker's immediate superior or the division head, only four states permit no appeal from discharge. Thirty states give war veterans preference in filling positions in the state highway department. Forty-one states have their positions grouped into classifications while three do not. Twenty-three highway departments report the use of service ratings, and three make "some use" of one. Forty-three states report promotional opportunities, while two say there is only a limited chance for advancement. Only twelve states sponsor in-service training courses, and many of these are limited to particular groups of employees. All states provide workmen's compensation for employees, but only eight require physical examinations before hiring. Only twelve states provide retirement benefits of any kind, and only nine provide benefits for laborers. All but seven states give sick leave to employees in higher wage brackets, whereas thirty refuse sick leave to laborers. All states give vacations to employees in higher wage brackets, but twenty-nine refuse them to laborers. The amount of sick leave and vacation given is variable and is

sometimes based on the position held or the length of service. (The article contains two tables on personnel practices in state highway departments.)  
—Ray Mullins.

119. Wiltse, Charles M. **The representative function of bureaucracy.** *Am. Political Science Rev.* 35 (3) June 1941: 510-516.—The federal administrative agencies have become the common meeting ground of governmental functions on the one hand, both executive and legislative, and on the other hand, the special interest groups which constitute the public in its organized capacity. With the advent of modern transportation, communications, and industrialism, major interest groups became functional rather than sectional. Congress needed expert aid and advice in the task of legislating on highly complex economic and social problems. These needs were answered, and functional representation was accomplished through the creation of administrative agencies, each of which is especially concerned with particular industries or interest groups and is called upon to recommend appropriate legislation to Congress. The bureaucracy thus is the medium through which special interests express their wishes to the legislature and also the instrument through which Congress operates on interest groups. Although the tendency of federal administrators to build up political machines of their own has been called a source of danger, the federal administrator has little choice but to consult with and enlist the support of the interest group with which he deals if he is to keep his agency alive. Perhaps if the function of representing interest groups were intelligently developed by administrators, it might facilitate the closer integration of government and economic life, and the elimination of some of the abuses of pressure politics.—Frederick C. Mosher.

120. Yarmon, Morton. **New York State extends merit system.** *Nat. Municipal Rev.* XXX (5) May 1941: 253-257.—For forty-four years New York State has been completely oblivious to the demand in the state constitution that all public jobs must be filled by competitive test wherever practicable. After two years of intensive study of remedies by a special committee the legislature has now passed and the governor has signed a bill which lays plans for the first wholesale extension of civil service to every jurisdiction within the state. The Court of Appeals has ruled that the provisions in Article V, Sec. 6 of the constitution must be made effective. Three-fourths of the state's public jurisdictions remained outside the merit system. A court decision in 1937 implied that employment contracts made in good faith were invalid. In 1939 a special commission was created composed of three persons chosen by the governor and seven legislators chosen by the legislature. The commission became known as the

Fite Commission, so named from the Assemblyman who headed it. The act submitted by this commission recommended three types of civil service administration in the counties, (1) a county commission selected by the county supervisors, (2) a county personnel officer selected by the supervisors, or (3) administration by the State Civil Service Commission. In the last option all costs would be borne by the state. In either of the first two, technical assistance could be requested from the state free of charge. Every county must choose one of these options, but may change the form of administration to another form should the first choice prove unsatisfactory. Cities and special districts have similar choices and privileges. The State Commission was given an additional appropriation of \$50,000 to assist in rendering these services. The 150,000 incumbents are to be given status under the new system if they have been employed one year before the rules become effective in their particular jurisdiction. The Commission estimated that only from 20% to 25% of the positions logically fall into the competitive class. Residence requirements are to be set by the local appointing officers. It was recommended that the labor class be placed in the exempt group.—*Ray L. Wilbur, Jr.*

#### PERSONNEL AGENCY MANAGEMENT

121. Cooper, Alfred M. **Public relations for public employees.** *Personnel Administration* 3 (9) May, 1941; 14-17.—Study of employee-consumer contacts in a large publicly owned electric utility revealed that many interviews involving consumer complaints failed to satisfy the consumer. Often this was due to the "You-can't-get-my-job-I'm-a-civil-service-employee" attitude on the part of employees. The program adopted to improve public relations was based upon a series of employee conferences to be conducted by the supervisors. Previous to each "round" of employee meetings, a "rehearsal" meeting was conducted by the training man in which supervisors were trained to lead employee conferences. A typical employee conference consisted of the dramatization of a discourteous interview, followed by an open discussion period. The value of the conference method is that all suggestions for improvement in contacting technique come from the employees themselves, and for this reason have greater weight and a far better chance of being put into practice on the job than have any exhortations delivered by a superior. Having the supervisor as conference leader likewise is advantageous in that (1) he becomes thoroughly sold on the value of the training program and supports it wholeheartedly, and (2) the supervisor is in a position to follow-up on the application of employee recommendations. After a series of conferences on general subjects, employees may begin the development of standard practice procedures in public contacting.—*William A. Grelle.*

122. Howard, L. V. **Federal restrictions upon the political activity of government employees.** *Am. Political Science Rev.* 35 (3) June 1941: 470-489. One of the earliest restrictions on the political activities of federal employees was an executive order of 1873 which prohibited them from holding state, local, or territorial offices at the same time. Certain restrictions were incorporated in the Pendleton Act of 1883. These included the prohibition of solicitations of political contributions by federal employees of other employees and the prohibition of any political solicitations in government buildings. This act also prohibited an employee's use of "official authority or influence" to coerce any political action. No uniformity in application of the latter restriction was gained until 1907 when Civil Service Commission Rule 1 was amended to prohibit classified employees from taking part in "political management or in political campaigns." A 1938 rule empowered the Commission to enforce the restrictions in the classified service and provided penalties for violation ranging from reprimand to removal. The effect of the first Hatch Act (1939) was to consolidate many of the rulings previously adopted by the Commission and to extend them to the unclassified service. It also made certain changes on previous rulings such as: permitting public expressions of opinions that are not a part of an organized political campaign; prohibiting an employee's membership in a revolutionary political party; etc. The Commission has assumed the function of interpreting and enforcing the law for classified employees, while the various departments enforce its provisions for the unclassified. The second Hatch Act (1940) applied restrictions similar to the above federal restrictions to employees of state and local governments whose principal employment is in a federally-aided activity. Furthermore, all state and local employees in agencies partly or wholly financed by federal aid, are prohibited from using their official authority to interfere with congressional or presidential elections. Federal agencies through which federal aid is dispensed are instructed to report violations to the U. S. Civil Service Commission, which, upon investigation and hearing, may order the removal of violators, and if necessary, order the withholding of salary payments from federal grants. The most difficult problem raised by the second Hatch Act is the interpretation, by the Commission, of the expression "principally employed." The Commission has generally restricted the application of the Act to functions actually aided by federal grants, exempting other functions even though they are in the same agency. Serious administrative difficulties have arisen in tracing the federal money to its ultimate use. The courts have generally upheld the constitutionality of the restrictions, and they appear to constitute a legitimate condition of federal grants.—*Frederick C. Mosher.*

123. Love, John W. **How a newspaperman likes statistics presented.** *J. of the American Statistical Association* 36 (214) June, 1941: 233-239. A journalist is necessarily a consumer of statistics, the quantity of which is now so great that more thought should be devoted to its packaging. The presentation of information in standard form, as practiced by the Census Bureau, with press releases and subsequent publications carrying information in the same language and in the same places in the tables facilitates comparison. Familiarity with the style aids the user in interpretation. Releases of the Census Bureau are not written directly for publication, which is to be commended since most newspapers rewrite what comes to them by mail, and the practice of putting statistical material in newspaper language is often unnecessary. Releases should be printed on one side of the paper with tables arranged so that they can be cut and pasted into articles, and the paper should be a standard letter size suitable for filing without folding. Since business men employ many ratios in their work, statistical material should include more ratios. The effort on the part of statisticians to make their product "popular" has its pitfalls. It would be much better to give out the information in its raw form with a few words of explanation than to attempt an exposition at a length which might inadvertently make it clear to the prospective user that the statistician's purpose was not the scholarly disclosure of truth but the hope of getting free advertising. For newspaper purposes, the simpler the chart the better, not merely because of the average man's inability to read charts but because few newspapers employ specialized draftsmen of charts and they dislike to publish material which readers recognize came from outside the newspaper office. It is wise to use as few statistics or statistical tables as possible in the running statement of an article and then separately to group the evidence either in tables or charts or both, due to the difficulties of making up into columns an article which contains tables as part of the running text. The reader can derive some meaning by merely looking at the charts, or he may read the article and never examine the tables.—*Michael Levine.*

124. Mater, Dan H. **The development and operation of the railroad seniority system.** *J. of Business* 13 (4) October, 1940: pp. 387-419. 14 (1) January, 1941: pp. 36-67.—The true origin of seniority as a custom is lost in antiquity; formal codifications of the custom are of comparatively recent date, however. The first of such codifications in this country seems to have been in the military—coming directly from the British military practice. The first industry in which a formal seniority system developed was the railroad industry. The causes for its formal development first in the railroad industry rather than in some other industry can be traced largely to the fact that the

railroad industry changed from one of local character to one involving great centralization of ownership and absenteeism. The results were, first, an industry of which the needs, from an organization standpoint, were markedly similar to those of the army and, second, an industry in which favoritism reached the proportions of a curse. The resulting desire or demand of the employees for a closer observance of the seniority custom resulted in a formal, written recognition of the principle. By the time of the entrance of this country into the World War the train and engine services had a wide coverage of seniority observance. The other unions, however, had made little more than a beginning in this respect. The Railroad Administration of the federal control era extended seniority to all other railroad employees as part of its policy to preclude labor troubles from interfering with the prosecution of the war. A year or so after the conclusion of the war the railroads were returned to their owners. As part of the program of returning them in the same condition as that in which they were received, all working conditions which had been established during the war were abrogated. By collective bargaining and by recourse to the government's board which had been set up to deal with railroad labor disputes, the employees have been able gradually to recapture the seniority privilege. It is fairly certain that the percentage of railroad employees who are working under formal seniority rules is not less than 95. The phases of job allocation to which seniority is applied have increased: at first seniority was used only as a method of selecting the employees who were to be laid off at a time of force reduction; at the present time seniority is the principal factor of consideration also in promotions and the filling of vacancies. Also the employer is required to recall the employees whom he previously laid off—in seniority order—before he can hire new employees. (The foregoing is a direct quotation from the summary appearing in the article.)—*Elton D. Woolpert.*

125. Mater, Dan H. **A statistical study of the effect of seniority upon employee efficiency.** *J. of Business* 14 (2) April 1941: 169-204. Railroad employees contend that seniority is desirable in that it prevents favoritism, causing employees to be contented and thereby improving their efficiency. From this viewpoint, the seniority method of selection for promotion, retention in time of layoff, recall from layoff, and vacancy-filling is an accurate one for determining the most efficient and therefore the most deserving employees. Railroad officials, on the other hand, usually regard seniority as a deadening influence upon employee efficiency and ambition. This article presents a measurement of the effect of seniority upon efficiency, based upon a study of the age, seniority, and efficiency data of several hundred railroad employees. The relationship between efficiency and



seniority is not a simple one, since age, the state of the labor market at the time of hiring, and the age at the time of hiring, are also factors. In general, it may be said that: (1) seniority is a separate force which is directly and cumulatively deleterious to the efficiency of employees; (2) it perpetuates and accentuates the evil effects of other factors which affect the efficiency of employees; (3) as a general rule, an employee is above the average efficiency of the whole group if his seniority and age together total between 33 and 60, inclusive; and (4) the direct and indirect effects of seniority greatly enhance the importance of employee selection. As a part of the latter, the presence of seniority makes it necessary to narrow the hiring-age much more severely than would otherwise be necessary.—*Abraham M. Aloff.*

126. Simon, Herbert A. **Measurement techniques in administrative research.** *Civic Affairs* VIII (9) May 1941: 1-2, 5-8. The recommended plan for reorganization of the federal government submitted some three years ago raised a storm of protest and criticism both political and among experts on administration. This federal controversy did not reveal any techniques, outside the political arena, for determining which group of experts was right. This instance is cited as the most striking recent example of a difficulty which underlies the whole field of administrative research. When the research worker attempts to apply the maxims developed to date to the practical problems of administration, he finds that for each applicable maxim there is a precisely contradictory maxim equally applicable. A wide gulf separates administrative principles on paper from administrative principles in action. The task of the administrator is not to accept the "best practices" but to prove and to improve them. Practical experience is indispensable for the advancement of theory. The prime need for administrative research is a technique for evaluating the actual operating effectiveness of an administrative organization. The formulation of the objectives of government and their evaluation relative to one another are primarily legislative problems on which appraisal can take place only after the objectives are defined in measurable and comparable terms. However, measurements of adequacy still leave unanswered the very important question of efficiency of administration. Professional administrators, interested in achieving results in their own fields, have sometimes tended to ignore the relative element in efficiency, but sight must never be lost of the fundamental distinction between the "adequacy" of a service and the "efficiency" of a service, which is the accomplishment relative to available resources. Although the measurements of results and costs provide the fundamental basis for the evaluation of an administrative agency, factors making for high or

low level service must be studied. The executive budget is the key instrument in making these factors an actuality. Present budget methods are inadequate. No standard is adopted for determining what percentages of the total will go for each service. Long term budgeting is a partial answer to the problem of scientific budgeting. Some rather definite predictions as to future revenues can be made, but there is the serious gap of knowing within wide limits how much it costs to achieve results of a given level. For example, how many fire companies does it take to keep fire losses below \$1.00 per capita? Although the picture is an Utopian one, progress can be made if research agencies are convinced of the fundamental importance of the problem and actively engage in trying to solve it. Without a technique of measurement, administrative research cannot be what we all hope it will be, a valuable tool for the betterment of public services.—*Ray L. Wilbur, Jr.*

#### CLASSIFICATION; PAY

127. Agar, Charles C. **Licensing of sewage plant operators.** *Sewage Works Journal* 13 (1) January 1941: 89-100.—State licensing of municipal sewage plant operators is not new, New Jersey having pioneered in this field in 1918, but the past few years have seen a marked acceleration in the adoption of licensing legislation. Before 1937 only three states had adopted licensing regulations; since then twelve states have inaugurated licensing plans, and in fourteen others such plans have been seriously considered. In most of these states the state health department administers the licensing provisions. The state health agency is believed to be the logical one to administer a mandatory license plan, or to serve in a representative capacity on a reviewing board if the licensing is on a voluntary basis. In at least six states the regulations exempted incumbent operators from the licensing requirements. Licenses are generally renewable, and in most cases there is a specific provision for revocation. When licenses require renewals, it is not so necessary to have revocation provisions. The granting of a license or certificate of qualification without a time limitation is not considered as satisfactory as a plan providing for renewals. In a strict license scheme only those already having licenses can be appointed, but there is merit in a modified plan under which the qualifications of a prospective operator are submitted for approval by the licensing agency. A licensing procedure in which the state exercises only a limited control over municipal operators is to be preferred. A reasonable limit would be to vest dismissal powers in the municipality but to allow replacements only from operators having state licenses or meeting state requirements. Licensing plans in most of the states have been adopted so recently

that definite conclusions regarding their results cannot be drawn, but where they have been given a fair trial the consensus is that the results have been satisfactory. (A table summarizing state licensing provisions is included in this article.)—*Elton D. Woolpert.*

128. Deming, Dorothy. **Setting up new minimum qualifications for public health nurses.** *Am. J. of Public Health* 31 (2) February, 1941: 158-162.—In 1912, at the first meeting to organize the National Organization for Public Health Nursing it was recommended "that certain standards be upheld and recommended to all organizations employing visiting nurses." For some years after this, the N.O.P.H.N. membership requirements seem to have determined the standards of desirable qualifications for positions, and in 1923 and 1924 the publication of the Goldmark Report on nursing education started the organization on its career of recommending minimum qualifications for appointment to positions. That report pointed out weaknesses in public health nursing and recommended that every public health nurse undertake a postgraduate program of study in public health nursing. After continued revisions of qualifications it now appears that, more than ever before, experience is the basis for setting up new qualifications. The question always arises as to whether to set standards that reflect actual practice or desired goals, and the N.O.P.H.N. usually compromises between these two viewpoints. The last five years have seen the growth of merit systems as a way of selecting public personnel through open competition under nonpartisan auspices. The N.O.P.H.N. plans to formulate new qualifications, keeping in mind the present trend in qualifications for public health nurses employed under those systems. Among the questions raised by those who have been working on qualification standards are: (1) shall we continue to make a difference in the requirements for the nurse working alone in a rural service and those for the nurse working under close supervision? (2) how much postgraduate work should be required prior to appointment? (3) should we require educational preparation in psychology, sociology and education for those appointed as administrators? (4) in the supervisory field should any additional theory be required? How to use the standards is the most vital problem of all, for the qualifications mean nothing if they are not put to use. We must also remind ourselves that the only justification for qualifications at all is performance superior to that given by an unqualified nurse.—*Jack H. Foster.*

129. Hayford, F. Leslie. **An inquiry into the nature and causes of statisticians.** *J. of the Am. Statistical Assn.* 36 (213) March 1941: 1-10.—It has been pro-

posed that the American Statistical Association classify and grade its members as a means to the elevation of standards of statistical work, one of its major objectives. A basic difficulty lies in the fact that quality in statistical work is vital and exceedingly difficult to measure in its various manifestations, quantitative measurements often seriously failing to reflect vital differences in quality. What is a statistician? To state it imperfectly, a statistician is one who is versed in handling mass data. The basic functions of a statistician constitute a trinity: the assembling of numerical data, their analysis, and the interpretation of the results of such analysis. Those who assemble data ought to have some idea of the purpose for which the data are being assembled; for the methods of collection which are appropriate for one purpose may be quite inappropriate for another. Those who analyze statistics should know the nature of the data, their sources, and the methods used in their collection, as well as just why they are thus engaged, and should be concerned themselves with the possible interpretations that may be put on their results. And those who interpret statistical analyses should know something of the methods of the analyses and of the data used, if they would safeguard themselves against reaching wrong conclusions. In addition to this trinity of functions, the statistician must be a user of words as well as mathematics in order to bridge the chasm between the makers and the desired users of statistical reports. The desire of communities and individuals to learn more about themselves and the world they live in, the use of statistics as an aid to understanding and discovery in the physical, biological, and social sciences, and the growing public belief in the efficacy of figures to prove things have opened up opportunities for statisticians of various grades and shades. Contributing causes of certain variants of statisticians include the kind of training received through formal instruction; the statistical and other journals which tempt one to rush into print; and the uses of statistics in government as the basis of legislation and of governmental administrative policy. These are unusually important times and it will be difficult for statisticians not to do harm. Too much the practice of statistics has come to be looked upon as a business rather than as a scientific pursuit. These times of crisis call us to the rekindling of the spirit of devoted truth-seeking, to the guarding of truth in statistics and in statisticians—the spiritual side of the statistician.—*Michael Levine.*

130. McIver, Pearl. **Analysis of the present qualifications of public health nurses in the United States.** *Am. J. of Public Health* 31 (2) February, 1941: 151-157.—The public health nursing group was one of the first professional groups to define the qualifications of its members. A joint committee of several

health organizations prepared minimum qualifications for nursing positions which were published in 1925, revised in 1930 and again in 1935. Academic education, basic nursing education, and public health preparation were strengthened by each successive revision of these standards. As steady progress was made increasing the "minimum requirements" it was hoped that a large percentage of the public health nurses were meeting the requirements. Because the use of social security funds in training public health personnel made it desirable to have as accurate a picture as possible of nursing qualifications, this year in connection with the annual census of public health nursing an attempt was made to secure such data. Only the two factors of academic education and public health preparation were included in the study of the 17,470 public health nurses employed by state and local agencies. Fifteen percent of the group had not finished high school and nine percent had one or more academic degrees. This is an encouraging advance compared with the information secured through a 1934 survey. A recent United States Public Health Service study showed that the type of agency appears to cause less variation in qualifications of public health nurses than does geographic location. Nurses employed by official agencies in the rural areas are the best prepared group from the standpoint of academic education and public health training, and the nurses in the western states have more preparation than those in any other section of the country. It is recommended that the state health departments keep up-to-date information on public health nursing qualifications, and also that nationwide analyses be made at least every five years to ascertain the relationship between the recommended standards and their attainment.—*Jack H. Foster.*

131. Pruefer, Clifford H. **Classification in the federal service and the emergency.** *Am. Political Science Rev.* 35 (3) June 1941: 506-510. One of the most pressing federal personnel problems is the increasing difficulty of securing and retaining high grade employees in the face of higher salaries and wages in private industry and rising costs of living. Unlike private industry, where prevailing rates of wages are paid for comparable work, federal pay is based upon the static salary standards established by the Classification Act of 1923, as amended. Salaries of appointees as well as promotional salaries must accord with position-allocation based upon duties and responsibilities, which in turn must be approved by civil service investigators. In many cases, and especially in such defense agencies as the War and Navy Departments, such salaries are sufficient neither to entice qualified new employees nor to retain experienced ones. The defense program, the government career system, the federal employees, and private industry which must deal with govern-

ment agencies will suffer from the growing disparity of government pay standards and prevailing wages unless the condition is corrected. There are three possible solutions to the problem: (1) The appropriation by Congress of funds for administrative promotions within grades would be a great help; two bills have recently been introduced providing such funds. (2) A general increase of the entire salary schedules could be made by amendment of the Classification Act. Such general increases were made in 1928 and 1930, but little consideration has been given to the suggestion at the present time. (3) Classification standards could be generally eased, subject to review after the emergency; satisfactory progress is being made along this line.—*Frederick C. Mosher.*

132. Viteles, Morris S. **A psychologist looks at job evaluation.** *Personnel* 17 (3) February, 1941: 165-176.—Job evaluation is of vital significance in facilitating transfer and promotion on a rational basis; in eliminating duplication of activities; in coordinating inter-departmental activities; in preventing inequalities in payment for similar work; and in serving the interests of good management and of satisfactory employer-employee relations in many other ways. It is therefore important to stop and take stock of our job evaluation methods. There are two general types in use—the rating method and the ranking method. A survey of job evaluation rating programs leads to the conclusion that they can be considerably improved by a more careful choice of the factors to be considered, by limiting the number of these, and by providing concrete definitions of the situations or factors considered in appraising the job. The number of factors considered necessary for the appraisal of a job by the rating method varies from three to as many as fifty. The use of a large number of points encourages a refinement of judgment beyond that merited by the notably rough and unreliable estimates which are being translated into numerical concepts. There is ample evidence from psychological experiments that few, if any, observers are capable of making complex differentiations (of the type involved in job evaluation by the rating method), to a degree of refinement beyond a range of five or six or perhaps at most seven points on a scale. In job evaluation by the ranking method, analysts should consider the results of psychological investigations which suggest that the reliability and validity or ranking can be considerably increased through the use of the method of paired comparisons where each job or unit is successively compared with every other job or unit. The author expresses a preference for the ranking method over the rating method but emphasizes that this is merely an expression of personal liking and that before either method is accepted a superior intensive experimental inves-

tigation is needed. A discussion of job evaluation is not complete without mention of job pricing and wage administration. Most job analysts agree that there should be a range of rates determining the limits of a job. Although there appears to be a demand from labor for a single rate, there is psychological justification for using a range for each group of jobs, and also for providing overlapping between grades which are adjacent to one another on the yardstick prepared by job evaluation procedures.—Robert Coop.

### RECRUITMENT; SELECTION; INDUCTION

133. Adams, Clifford R. **A new measure of personality.** *J. of Applied Psych.* 25 (2) April, 1941: 141-151.—One of the major needs of applied psychology is a valid and reliable personality test suitable for use in employment situations. Present-day personality tests are of chief value in clinical situations. Several years ago the writer undertook the construction of a personality test that could be used in industry. His aim was to construct a test relatively free from those highly personal items that invalidate many existing tests in other than clinical situations. One form of this test was administered to 356 college students and an analysis made of the discrimination value of each item. To meet the criterion of internal consistency all items below a *t* value of 3.00 were eliminated. A subsequent revision, made with the collaboration of Dr. William M. Lepley, and using 400 college students as subjects, resulted in *The Personal Audit*, made up of nine sub-tests each consisting of 50 items. The consensus of fourteen psychologists as to what the various parts might measure follows: I. Sociability, extroversion; II. Suggestibility, tendency to agree with authority; III. Ability to withstand frustration; IV. Tendency to rationalization; V. Tendency to anxiety; VI. Tendency to excessive sexual emotionality and conflicts; VII. Tendency to personal intolerance; VIII. Tendency to flexibility or docility of attitudes; IX. Tendency to think (possibly worry) about unsolved problems. The test is self-administering and no time limits are set. Subjects should complete the form in 40-50 minutes. The scoring is simple and the form can be scored for nine personality traits in four to five minutes. Percentile norms are available for both men and women. Determined by the "odd-even" method and corrected by the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula, the reliability coefficients for the nine sub-tests range from .90 to .96. Intercorrelations indicate that as far as practicable purposes are concerned, nine relatively independent personality factors are measured by the form. The status of further validation studies of *The Personal Audit* is presented in some detail in the manual.—Stanley S. Berg.

134. Blankenship, Albert B. **Methods and problems in measuring administrative traits.** *Public Personnel Quarterly* 2 (2) Spring, 1941: 69-72.—Many different methods have been used in investigating this problem of defining administrative traits. It might help to clarify our thinking if we review briefly the various types of approach that have been used. (1) The *intuitional approach*, which simply lists so-called administrative traits without the presentation of any evidence at all to support their claims. This sort of approach has not and cannot be successful. (2) The *biographical method* has been applied in two distinct forms. Some investigators have merely stated the required qualities for administrators, and have pulled cases out of the air to support their contentions. This inductive method is obviously on dangerous ground. The deductive biographical approach is much safer. Here the researcher carefully studies a number of biographies of administrators, and attempts to deduce the qualities required of those persons. The method has the disadvantages of being time-consuming and expensive, there is no assurance that independent workers will decide upon identical elements as the important ones. Besides, any generalization from this sort of material is difficult because the subject-matter is so personalized and situations so disparate. (3) The *case history method* is similar to the biographical approach, except that the observer records the occurrences in administrative situations, and then attempts to generalize as to the qualities needed of administrators. In this procedure it is possible for independent observers to arrive at almost the identical write-up of the same situation, but generalizations will be difficult because of the intricacies of disparate situations and administrators. (4) The *informal job analysis* technique requires the observer to list the duties and requirements of the administrative work, either from his own experience or from the experience of others. From the elements which are listed, the qualities required for the position are then deduced. Unfortunately, however, most workers have not been trained in job analysis, and the listed qualities may exist either on paper or only in the mind of the person who is hiring someone to fill the position. (5) The *formal job analysis* is conducted by an unbiased and trained investigator whose immediate objective is to list the duties and requirements of the job in order to determine what qualities are required of administrators. A really comprehensive and scientific study of this sort in the administrative field still remains to be undertaken. (6) A *direct analysis of administrators' characteristics* may be undertaken. In this method, a number of administrators are taken as a group, and their characteristics are measured. This method is empirical and objective, although the investigator may not analyze the proper elements.



Probably no one of these methods can ever supply the most useful knowledge about the qualities of administrators. Combinations are likely to get at the issues more fully. For the most useful results, the group of administrators must be compared with some standard or criterion, if one can be found. Furthermore, the traits sought for must be unit traits, and not expressed in such general terms that they would be an asset to a man in almost any position. Another pitfall to be avoided is the temptation to assume that the qualities found necessary to business and educational administrators also apply to public administrators. When the psychologist talks of measuring the entire range of characteristics of an individual, he is speaking of the abilities, interests and temperament of that person. L. J. O'Rourke is studying administrators from the standpoint of aptitude and ability; P. H. French and E. K. Strong from the standpoint of administrative interests, and L. L. Thurstone is using a novel approach to measure the temperamental qualities of administrators. Perhaps the three types of investigations will give results which may be combined in some form to give an overall idea of administrative qualities. Although Strong has found characteristic interest patterns for groups of broad scope, investigators have had no such success in the measurement of temperamental characteristics. One of the many difficulties is that a person's temperamental traits vary even from moment to moment and from situation to situation. Furthermore, even the present temperament tests which do show some unity in the traits they measure are not valuable in the employment situation. Thus, Dr. Thurstone's novel approach in measuring the temperamental characteristics of administrators is particularly timely.—Charles H. Bentley.

135. Brush, Edward N. **Mechanical ability as a factor in engineering aptitude.** *J. of Applied Psych.* 25 (3) June, 1941: 300-312.—The purpose of this investigation was to explore the possibilities of available tests of mechanical ability and aptitude as indicators of aptitude for engineering. Such tests might well be considered partial measures of engineering aptitude if they could be shown to bear a substantial relationship to academic success in a college of engineering. Validation of tests against ultimate professional success, although preferable, is beyond the scope of the present investigation. In the present study a number of tests of mechanical ability (including the MacQuarrie Test for Mechanical Ability, three of the Minnesota tests, three of O'Connor's Worksamples, and three of Cox's tests) were administered to first-year students in the College of Technology at the University of Maine in order to determine the prognostic value of each test and of combinations of the tests. Scholastic standing in courses of an engineering nature were taken as the

criterion of success. Ten tests were administered to one group (104 students) and nine to a second group (127 students). Of the nine tests given to the latter group, four were Columbia Research Bureau Achievement Tests. Results indicated that mechanical ability, as measured by the tests administered in the present study, bears a significant relationship to success in engineering courses and may be regarded as a component of engineering aptitude. Most of the tests administered, however, showed too small a relationship to afford significant predictability when used singly. When combined into batteries, a higher degree of relationship was revealed, multiple correlation coefficients ranging from .301 to .544. On the other hand, the achievement tests, singly and in combination, were found to predict success in engineering studies more effectively than the tests of mechanical ability. First-semester and first-year grades are more closely correlated with the total engineering college record than is any test or combination of tests. (A large part of this paper consists of a survey of published studies of engineering aptitude. The results of this investigation are set forth in four tables presenting first-order correlations between each test, first-year grades and "total grades" and multiple correlations between various combinations of tests and total grades.)—Stanley S. Berg.

136. Dudycha, George J. **A suggestion for interviewing for dependability based on student behavior.** *J. of Applied Psych.* 25 (2) April, 1941: 227-231.—The purpose of this article is to assemble from various experimental investigations data which may prove of value to the interviewer when interviewing for dependability in employment situations. In earlier studies of punctuality and dependability the writer divided college students into groups of extreme earliness and lateness, and of dependability and undependability on the basis of objective observations of students' behavior in life situations. These groups were given lists of statements and questions, the responses to which indicate attitudes, beliefs, and self-estimates. The 16 questions in which there are 97-100 chances in 100 of a true difference between the answers of the early and late groups or the dependable and undependable groups are presented. Also included are ten questions selected from a scale by C. K. A. Wang for measuring persistence (one aspect of dependability). It is suggested that these 26 questions be administered in employment situations in an attempt to determine their efficacy in discovering those applicants who are likely to prove dependable after they have been employed.—Stanley S. Berg.

137. French, Patterson H. **Progress report on research in administrative aptitude.** *Public Personnel Quarterly* 2 (2) Spring, 1941: 66-68.—There has

been a constantly increasing realization that while a great deal of excellent research is being done on administrative structure and administrative processes, students of administration will have to move slowly until more is known about administrators. To this end, the Committee on Public Administration of the Social Science Research Council has asked: What is it that makes a man a good administrator? Are there certain qualities of mind and personality that will be found in good administrators regardless of their fields of activity? Could two people with no single attribute in common make a success of the same administrative job? Are we perhaps entirely on the wrong track in trying to find common qualities among administrators rather than in concentrating on the question of how well or how badly administrators match their jobs? In order to stimulate research in the field of administrative aptitudes, the Committee on Public Administration has undertaken a project involving the use of the Vocational Interest Test developed by Professor Edward K. Strong, Jr., of Stanford University. The Committee is asking several hundred administrators to fill out Professor Strong's Vocational Interest Test Blanks. This is a self-administered test of interests and preferences, not an intelligence or an aptitude test, and consists of four hundred questions of the short-answer type. The last section is a particularly interesting one, in which the subject is asked to rate himself as to various characteristics: whether he thinks that he has good judgment, plans his work well, and so forth. The method of scoring the blanks for administrators will have to be developed after a good many of them have been returned. No prediction can be made in advance about the possibility of developing an interest profile for the "typical administrator." The most that can be done is to point to certain areas in which the results may be productive: we may learn something about the breadth of interests of administrators, about the extent to which the interest patterns of administrators in different fields differ, and about the extent to which administrators follow the interest patterns of other people in their own fields rather than the patterns of administrators in other fields.

Since the principal problem was to compile the lists of administrators to whom test blanks should be sent, it was decided to operate as far as possible through organizations and individuals who would suggest the names of administrators in their own fields and who would assist in selling the idea to the people who were selected. About seven hundred blanks have been distributed with the assistance of twelve organizations and individuals. Two hundred completed tests have been returned so promptly that there is every reason to hope for an encouragingly large amount of cooperation on the part of those who have received the tests. The

purpose of the project, aside from its usefulness, is to learn something about administrators themselves, and through them something about the administrative process. It may be possible also to learn something about how to choose people for administrative work and, going a step further, how to train people to be better administrators.—Charles H. Bentley.

138. Fuchs, E. F. and Tinkelman, S. **Physical skill and intellectual capacity.** *Public Personnel Quarterly* 2 (2) Spring, 1941: 63-65.—Modern personnel selection techniques sometimes employ both competitive mental and physical tests on the assumption that each makes an important contribution that cannot be derived from the other. The holding of a competitive examination in 1940 by the New York City Civil Service Commission for Sanitation Man, a position hitherto in the labor class, affords an excellent opportunity to check upon the applicability of this important principle to civil service testing. The results of the investigation made uphold the assumption that physical and mental test scores are not strongly related for those individuals who do pass civil service tests. Approximately 85,000 men filed for the examination. About 50,000 candidates attained a passing mark of 75% on the mental test and were given the physical test. The pass mark in the physical test was the mark of the person ranking 7,500 in order of competitive standing. Because of ties, approximately 7,800 candidates were passed. Position on the eligible list was determined by physical test mark; in case of ties, the candidate with the higher mental test score received preference. For comparative purposes, it was decided to select from the eligible list four groups of 100 consecutive eligibles each, roughly spaced so as to cover the entire range of the eligible list. Since ties were resolved in favor of written test marks, it was necessary to add to the 100 men in any given group all eligibles receiving the same physical test mark. This procedure resulted in the following four groups: 117 men selected from the top of the list; 187 men ranking about 3,000; 225 men ranking about 5,000; and 142 men from the bottom of the list. The average physical test marks for these four groups were respectively 98, 91, 88 and 85. Although the average physical test mark drops for successive groups, the average mental test scores show almost no variation: 90, 89, 90, and 89 respectively. In short, physical test marks bore no relationship to mental test marks. The conclusion is, then, that there is no necessary incompatibility or compatibility between the possession of brains and brawn. It follows that the "brains vs. brawn" controversy that arises so frequently when the selection of firemen or policemen is discussed is not rooted in actuality.—Charles H. Bentley.

139. Hay, Edward N. **Tests in industry—I, their proper use; II, practical illustration.** *Personnel Journal* 20 (1) May, 1941: 3-15.—Sired by World War-I production needs, and lifted from the womb of our schools of education, psychological methods enjoyed widespread application in industrial personnel administration in the post war period; but congenital weakness traceable to a dearth of skilled psychologists, coupled with the impatience of industry with an emerging science, resulted in a falling off of interest in psychological methods applied practically to everyday personnel administration. Present defense production requirements have again turned industry's eyes toward the psychologist in an effort to rid production of many of its personnel bugbears. In the interregnum some, though not many, of the nation's leading firms maintained staffs engaged in psychological research and in its practical use in their management problems. The experience of these firms can serve today as a keystone and bench-mark for the nation's expanded industry.

Original employment must anticipate a lifetime of service with the organization, and every possibility that lies ahead must in some degree be given consideration. The studies of Wadsworth and Pond illustrate the importance of good intelligence test scores for clerical work. Each established, working independently, that the greatest incidence of so-called "problem" employees is found among those having less than 105 I.Q. (Otis). Consequently each has been able to establish minimum entrance requirements at this level. By screening out everyone who scores below the critical point located in the examination, most of the future problem employees are automatically eliminated. Thorough tests, supplemented by careful subjective analyses of the individual, can reveal information of vital importance which could otherwise not be discovered except by a long period of trial on the job. Trouble arises when an employee of moderate intelligence is promoted successively until finally reaching a level of job complexity where problems occur which he lacks the mental ability to solve readily. Psychological test information, with respect to promotion, must be adequate and used properly. There must be sufficient criteria for the higher jobs, standardized with reference to test scores, to enable us to predict probable future success of an employee who is to be promoted.

Tests based on job analyses and production records, critically compared with selected tests of specialized ability and aptitude are commonly used to predict, within certain limits of accuracy, the probable production of an employee when he has been trained to the job. Public employment offices have considerably increased placements after installing the test program developed by the Worker Analysis Section, Bureau of Employment Security, Social Security Board.

Among the possible fields to which psychological testing can be applied, and which have thus far been largely neglected by the practical psychologist are: employee training; employer-employee relations; and supervisor-employee relations. Exploration and the prospect of eventually mastering these fields offer the greatest challenge to the industrial psychologist.

Satisfied executives are one criterion to the success of psychological methods in employment in a particular company. Guy W. Wadsworth, Jr., in "Tests Prove Worth to a Utility," (*Personnel Journal*, Vol. XIV, p. 183, November 1935) showed that in a comparison of a group of employees who were hired as a result of tests with another group hired without being tested, supervisors using a three-point scale rated 12.5 percent more of the tested employees as "Satisfactory," 11 percent more as "Outstanding," and 23.5 percent fewer as "Problems," than they did the untested group. Another measure of the effectiveness of employees hired by means of tests is afforded where a production record is available. This was used by the author in The Pennsylvania Company of Philadelphia on a group of 40 machine bookkeepers. After trying many criteria, results finally indicated that individual rates of production offered a satisfactory index to success. The selection of individual rates of production rather than error score as the criterion was made when error score was found to bear no appreciable relationship to test scores. A battery of tests containing the Otis S-A, Form B, Minnesota Number and Name Checking, Healy Tapping, Taylor Number, and Turner Coordination tests was selected and administered to the group. The Healy Tapping Test, Turner Coordination Test and an Aural Number Memory test and a rating on Months of Experience in the Job were discarded when they were found to have little or no relationship to production. Results of applying this battery to the group, divided according to production records into "20 Best" and "20 Poorest" machine bookkeepers were as follows: the percentage of errors for both groups was 1.14; only 3 of the "Best" had I.Q. scores below 88, whereas 9 of the "Poorest" were below this score; 1 of the "Best" had made a score below 130 in the Minnesota Name Checking Test, whereas 12 of the "Poorest" had failed to reach a 130 score; and 1 of the "Best," compared with 8 of the "Poorest," had failed to net a score of 130 or better on the Minnesota Number Checking Test. Thus a strong correlation between these tests and a desirable level of production is indicated. Industry can well effect savings through better selection by use of such methods applied by the industrial psychologist. The savings made possible by culling out "misfit" or otherwise less desirable employees may likely justify the expense of the test program. Limitations on the validity of these tests reside essentially in such imponderables as poor health, personal problems or

other related factors which only the gods can predict.—Walter Evers.

140. Lentz, Theodore F. and Whitmer, Edith F. **Item synonymization: a method for determining the total meaning of pencil-paper reactions.** *Psychometrika* 6 (2) April, 1941: 131-139. Item synonymization seeks as a goal the total meaning of pencil-and-paper items. In contrast to other methods, it is not concerned with the question, "Is the particular item related to a specific variable?" Rather it is concerned with the question, "What are the variables with which the item is related?" Current methods attempt to find how much the item correlates with a proposed criterion; item synonymization seeks to find all of that with which the item correlates. It is assumed that correlated items as a group give a more adequate picture of its symptom-bearing components than the item itself. An item synonymy is defined as a group of items consisting of all the items, or an adequate sample thereof, which are found to correlate with a single key item and used to secure single scores upon individual persons. Item synonymization consists of the following steps: (1) Securing reactions of many subjects to many items; (2) Correlating a particular item—the key item—with each of the other items; (3) Selecting appreciably correlated items for an item synonymy; (4) Inspecting these correlated items for purposes of interpreting the meaning of the key item; (5) Scoring each member of the old, or a new population, using the synonymy as a test, and testing for reliability; (6) Correlating this score with other scores of known meaning; (7) Correlating the item and its synonymy; (8) Comparing the item correlates with the synonymy correlates. Experiments with this method of item analysis are being made with data from the *Youth Expressionnaire*, compiled by the Character Research Institute, Washington University, in cooperation with the U. S. Office of Education. This instrument contains 3000 pencil-and-paper items of a general nature and requires 7 hours to complete. About 1000 persons have taken the test. The results of four items are given special study. These are: "Telling a lie is worse than taking the name of God in vain"; "Do you smoke?"; "Would you like to be a playground director?"; "Do you frequently, occasionally or never read poetry?" An  $r$  of .89, estimated on the basis of certain assumptions, between the item and its synonymy is secured under conditions which make it probable that (a) a degree of impurity resides in the synonymy, and (b) that a more adequately representative synonymy can be obtained by the use of a greater reservoir from which to pick correlated items. The general conclusion is reached that item synonymization possesses rich possibilities for item analysis and the extension of test item technology, and that this or some other correlational method of intensive study will yield rich returns in

more adequate pictures of what items represent and measure.—Abraham M. Aloff.

141. Palmerston, L. R. **Psychological tests in industry and education.** *Personnel J.* 19 (9) March 1941: 325-335.—Few personnel men or the general public seem to appreciate the significance of the movement in psychological testing, and too often the mental test is described either as a cure-all or else has been the subject of severe criticism. The author of this article attempts to explain briefly the problems in which the movement was conceived, the basic principles upon which it rests, the methods now used, and the results of the application of such techniques to personnel and guidance problems. Mental tests were developed as a partial answer to such human problems as the selection of workers for industry, and the problems of the social and economic misfit. The author examines several of the principles which are basic assumptions upon which psychology builds and validates its techniques. The first of these is that human traits are distributed according to a dependable and uniform pattern commonly called the biological curve, or normal frequency curve. Second, these traits may assume strikingly different combinations in different individuals, and weakness in one trait or several traits does not mean weakness in all traits. Third, the differences observed in people are differences in degree rather than differences in kind. Fourth, all psychological generalizations must be expressed in terms of probability, not certainty. We can rely upon the law of large numbers, but the behavior of any one individual cannot be predicted with certainty. Fifth, psychologists feel that any psychological test or refinement in technique which is superior to the traditional methods of judging people (i.e. hunches, snap-judgments, etc.) is worth while. The psychologist does not claim that his test measures the ability or trait in question directly. He measures intelligence as the engineer measures electricity—by what it does. He has developed in the last thirty years various tests of achievement, general aptitude, special aptitude, interest, and personality. His efforts have piled up a mass of evidence which cannot be ignored. But laymen as well as the psychologist must realize that even a good instrument can be a dangerous tool in the wrong hands. It must be admitted frankly that many bad tests have been placed upon the market. Psychology and the mental testing movement, like astronomy and physics, have had some very undesirable in-laws. We must learn that tests merely provide more refined statements of probability, not statements of certainty, as some pseudo-psychologists would have us believe. Mental tests do not decide, they merely provide a valuable supplement to good judgment and subjective evaluation. The author then discusses briefly some results achieved with the Strong



Vocational Interest Test, the Finger and Tweezer Dexterity Tests developed by Johnson O'Connor, the Minnesota Vocational Test for Clerical Workers, the Aptitude Test for Nursing developed by Moss and Hunt, and the American Council Psychological Examination. The author also lists a number of specific results such as "reduction of labor turnover from fifty-five to ten percent among cigaret packers," which followed the introduction of psychological methods.—*Harry Albert.*

142. Pond, Millicent. **Tests for the selection of office employees.** *Personnel* 17 (13) February, 1941: pp. 199-207.—Technology, rather than having reduced the intellectual demands on clerical employees, has increased our demand for comprehension, variability, speed, accuracy, reasoning ability, and an ability to cooperate with others in office work. Speed in clerical work, constant alertness for error, and quick recognition of errors are in themselves mental requirements. It is therefore increasingly important to evaluate the intelligence and adaptability of clerical employees before and after employment. The Scovil Manufacturing Company, for whom Dr. Pond works, determined that the qualities for which they were looking in clerical employees were quick understanding, capacity for rapid and accurate work, ability to learn complex material, verbal ability, ability with numbers, specific skills on office machines (or a probable ability to learn such skills), and an ability to cooperate with others. To evaluate these qualities in applicants for employment they are now using a combination of personal interview, a paper and pencil general intelligence test, and performance tests on the machines in question. The intelligence test which Dr. Pond and her associates developed was given to 200 clerical workers already employed by the company. Their work was later analyzed and rated by supervisors, and these ratings were checked with records of promotion, demotion and discharge. For both men and women there was a steady rise in the percentage of successful workers as the scores increased—from 10 per cent for the few who scored below 130 on the scale, to 94 per cent for those who scored 180 or over. About one third of the group scored above 170, and about two thirds scored above 160. In the third of the group that scored from 160 to 169, the percentage of satisfactory workers was practically the same as the percentage for the whole group. A minimum score for all clerical work was therefore set at 160. Scores of 170 or over are, of course, desired, and they are consequently given added weight. Dr. Pond stresses the point that care in interviewing is quite as important as it ever has been, but that the interviewer, using tests, has more concrete information on which to base his judgments than was formerly developed.

With this procedure, selections for clerical work have a much higher degree of success than is possible without tests.—*Robert Coop.*

143. Powell, N. J. **Steps in written test construction.** *Public Personnel Quarterly* 2 (2) Spring, 1941: 73-76.—Possible guides to the determination of the abilities to be measured in a written test, which is the first step in written test construction, are the analyses of the job for which the test is being given and of the position higher in the line of promotion; the use of published job analyses studies; previous tests given by other commissions; standardized tests; and published psychological, educational or personnel studies; and finally, an examination of the remainder of the personnel processes, such as the training facilities available for the job. The second step is the determination of test content, the possible guides in this step being previous tests given by other commissions, standardized tests, published psychological, educational or personnel studies, field investigation, and the attractiveness of appearance of the various types of content. The third step, allocation of emphasis, comprises the weighting process. Weights to be allocated to the various abilities and item content may be guided by the degree to which the item type probably differentiates among levels of significant abilities, by job analysis, previous examinations constructed by the agency or by other agencies, published experimental or quantitative studies, attractiveness of appearance of the various types of item content, the ease of writing particular classes of items, and the presence or absence of components other than the written test in the examination process. The weighting process presupposes a determination of the length of test required in terms of both items and time, and of the objective nature of the test. The decision with regard to length and test category is influenced by the number of candidates, total work load of the office, minimum required for satisfactory differentiation, test preparation and rating time required, appearance of the product, presence or absence of components other than a written test in the examination, importance of the position for which the test is given, and the types of abilities to be measured.

In the fourth step, preparation of the items, the sources for questions are field investigation, literature, other published tests, and the experience of the examiner. The next step is the arrangement and editing of the test items, which should be guided by highlighting the best-looking material, grouping items for homogeneity of content, placing easy items before difficult ones, minimizing instructions, and providing for as little divergence as possible in content and form between successive item types. Items should then be carefully edited. The sixth step, the experimental tryout on a small group of

staff members, provides a basis for setting test time limits, locating key defects, checking ambiguities, evaluating probable test difficulty, appraising adequacy of test instructions and determining proper test length. In setting up the final test copy, which is the next step, items are rewritten, deleted or added on the basis of tryout results, and should be made up well in advance of the test to permit drastic rewriting if necessary. The eighth and last step is a consideration of test preparation integrity in both appearance and fact, to the end that the secrecy of the examination may be preserved beyond all question.—*Charles H. Bentley.*

144. Powell, Norman J. **Examining examiners.** *Educational and Psychological Measurement I* (2) April, 1941: 157-172. The New York City Civil Service Commission appointed a committee of educational administrators to prepare the written test for selecting the examiners who rate applicants for professional positions in the city school system. The examination was rated as follows: written test, 4; oral examination, 2; appraisal of training and background, 4. The written test consisted of essay questions, arranged for maximum objectivity in evaluation. Certain problems were graded on sound reasoning, demonstrated breadth and depth of scholarship and conciseness of expression as well as on the factual material. To reduce unreliability in grading, a point rating scale was used, key answers were made for certain parts of the examination, and final ratings were the mean of independent ratings of two or three examiners. Though no satisfactory criterion of validity exists for such a civil service test the background of the special committee and the appearance of the test suggest that it was valid. The results showed that either it was too difficult or that the candidates were too poorly equipped; only twenty-nine out of fifty-eight competitors passed. The oral test required judgment in sample situations met on the job. The reliability of the ratings assigned by the examining experts was .91 (.97 corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula.) Only one competitor passed all parts of the examination. Seven of the failed competitors sued to invalidate the examination, which was reviewed once by a committee on manifest errors and three times by the courts, who finally declared a new examination necessary, although they disagreed on the grounds for the necessity. The new examination qualified three people, including the original successful competitor.—*J. A. Ohlson.*

145. Riker, Britten L. and Gaudet, Frederick J. **The use of some tests in the prediction of legal aptitude.** *J. of Applied Psych.* 25 (3) June 1941: 313-322.—The legal profession has made various attempts to solve the problem of selection of law school applicants. Some schools increased their minimum educa-

tional requirements to three or four years of college; others studied the relationship between success in law school and the quality of the student's college work. The first recorded efforts to utilize psychological tests in predicting legal success were made by Thorndike at Columbia University in 1921. In 1925 Ferson and Stoddard published a law aptitude examination consisting of four parts: verbal memory, reading comprehension, syllogistic reasoning, and a second reading comprehension test. Various studies of the validity of this test revealed correlations ranging from .42 to .547 between scores on the examination and first year law school grades. The present investigation was devoted to an analysis of the relation between law school grades achieved by 180 students entering the New Jersey Law School (now the Law School of the University of Newark) and their scores on four tests: the Ferson-Stoddard, the Dearborn Group Test (Examination C), the Otis Self-Administering Test of Mental Ability, and the Inglis Test of English Vocabulary. The Ferson-Stoddard yielded the highest correlation (.321) with law school success. It was superior in predicting not only the average grades of all three years, but also grade attainment in each of the three years of law school work. Part two of the Dearborn has sufficiently high validity to make further studies worth while. The Inglis and Otis have higher validity coefficients than the Dearborn and Part Four of the Ferson-Stoddard, but it is doubtful whether they are sufficiently more valid to justify the time required for their administration and scoring.—*Stanley S. Berg.*

## TRAINING

146. Dulsky, Stanley G. **Vocational counseling—I, by use of tests; II, by interview.** *Personnel Journal.* 20 (1) May, 1941: 16-28. Dodging serious and critical thinking by resorting to an impressive portfolio of deluxe, streamlined, sharply character-delineating "objective" tests is a habit increasingly becoming evident in the work of the vocational counselor. Twenty-five years ago, when psychologists were first being intrigued by the new measures of intelligence, and there were no handy, magical aptitude tests, the vocational counselor generally administered an intelligence test, had an interview with the person to be counseled, learned as much as he could about his school grades, his habits, interests, likes and dislikes, social adjustment and family background. But in the main, in correlating the results of these searchings, he relied on his own experience—which necessarily was broad if he were to be successful—and on his own critical weighing of the complex factors which he learned regarding the individual before giving him counsel. Then came the present "era of wonderful nonsense." Tests multiplied, educators grasped (and gasped) at the possibility of doing "scientific" guidance with the thoroughness,

dispatch, and objectivity of the modern industrial assembly line. The emphasis was placed on production, mass treatment—giving objective tests to hundreds at a time. Thus there was little time left to devote to the individual; and vocational counseling, as an *individual* service, perished in the effort to guide and save all.

New movements, like babies, often wander from the shortest route, and have to be replaced on the proper path. Now is the time for re-defining the goal and redirecting the course of vocational counseling. This is not to minimize the value of tests. It is merely to emphasize their limitations and their possible uses to intelligent and fruitful work in this field. Some observations in point: 1) The Minnesota group found that male office clerks were superior to garage mechanics on tests of finger dexterity, tweezer dexterity, and manual dexterity; 2) on the Thurstone Clerical Examination, Morton obtained an average score for draftsmen which was better than the average scores of office clerks and bookkeepers; 3) on the O'Connor Wiggly Block, which has been used as a measure of mechanical and engineering aptitude, the average scores of draftsmen and bookkeepers were nearly identical; 4) the Minnesota Vocational Test for Clerical Workers has been found to correlate better than the MacQuarrie Test for Mechanical Ability with measures of progress of toolmaker apprentices. These examples, and the many more available, should serve as warnings to vocational counselors, and should qualify their analyses of the results of every "objective" test.

Many classes of tests currently in use have but limited value. Among these are music and art aptitude tests. The few who will earn their livelihood in the fine arts have usually demonstrated their talents long before they might become candidates for guidance and, if so, do not require the services of a counselor. Those other "aptitude" tests which demonstrate high correlation with intelligence may be considered to measure essentially the same qualities as do general I. Q. examinations.

The greatest service which tests can render the counselor, in the words of Traxler, is to make possible a better description of personality than could otherwise be formulated; for it is valid, reliable, and meaningful description of personality that counselors need in guidance.

Counseling should not be done by first, routinely, giving the client a battery of tests. An interview should come first, and then should be administered whatever tests are necessary to search further along the lines disclosed in the interview as most essential. The interview, if conducted properly, will yield not only specific background information, but also knowledge of the feelings, wishes, prejudices and ambitions of the client. Ideally, it should cover the following areas: 1) education history; 2) employment history; 3) vocational aims; 4) interests, recrea-

tion and hobbies; 5) family background; 6) health; 7) practical considerations. Most important among the characteristics to be evaluated as a result of the interview are the motivation and personality of the client. When the general subject matter of the interview has been covered, the following question will often throw an entirely different light on the discussion: "If I had all the jobs in the world on my desk, and they all paid the same salary, and you could choose one and begin work at it tomorrow, and work at that job the rest of your life, what would you choose?"

Good counseling cannot become a mass-production process. The initial interview (mainly for information) and the follow-up conference (after test results are obtained) can easily require three to four hours. If only two hours are consumed in testing, then the entire procedure, per client, requires about five hours. And even good counseling must necessarily operate within the boundaries imposed by the lack of conclusive evidence regarding the preciseness of diagnoses of attitudes, interests, appreciations, and abilities whose very existence is open to doubt.

It should be emphasized that the analysis of the individual is only one phase of a comprehensive counseling program. We need, in addition, an analysis of occupations, the result of which is expressed in the same terms as the analysis of the individual, for purposes of comparison. Of equal importance is information about vocational opportunities. Until all these data are available, any recommendations must be made in general terms. Large areas of endeavor might be recommended and large areas eliminated. Only rarely can, and should, specific occupations be recommended.—*Walter Evers*.

147. Dreese, Mitchell *Guidance for a career in the public service*. *J. of Educational Sociology* 14 (5) January, 1941: 280-285.—Although the past decade with its disillusionment about fame and fortune to be found in business has seen a marked increase in the number of college students interested in the public service as a career, most of these students have only a hazy idea of opportunities and job requirements in the government service. Many of the colleges now professing to offer a curriculum in public administration will have to be made to realize that government activities are so broad that they must draw upon not only the school of government, but the total resources of the university, e.g., the law school, the school of social work, the school of engineering. The college or university has an obligation to collect and disseminate information concerning opportunities and careers in the public service. This should be done in connection with a vocational guidance program covering not only government careers but the full range of vocations likely to interest college students.

Even though a formal training and guidance program is not possible, a small committee can be charged with studying the resources of the university as they may contribute to the public service and national defense. Like the personnel department in a government agency, the organized student personnel service must stimulate and coordinate the personnel work carried on by all who contact the student in the operating functions of teaching and examining. The university which makes no systematic effort to apply the personnel techniques of government and industry in studying the aptitudes, abilities and interests of its students and assisting them to make the most of their potentialities is not making its greatest contribution to either the students or to the state. An organization chart is presented for a student personnel program in a municipal university of 7,000 students to be adapted for institutions of other sizes.—*Margaret Marshall.*

148. King, Joe J. **Telling a clerk about his agency: class method.** *Personnel Administration* 3 (4) December, 1940: 4-5.—An in-service training program to acquaint its stenographic and clerical staff with the basic philosophy and purposes of the organization has been established by the Northwest Regional Office of the Farm Security Administration. There is organized each November a "school" which consists of a series of lecture-discussion meetings on designated topics. Classes are scheduled during office hours, from 8:30 to 9:00 A.M., for ten consecutive days. Employees are assigned to small groups which are "taught" by administrative officials rotating from group to group on successive days. At the end of each course, each employee is given a copy of a true-false quiz covering the subjects discussed and is allowed five days to complete the questions. Having his paper graded is voluntary with the employee and no official records of grades are kept. Both administrative officials and employees are enthusiastic about the program. The former favor it because (1) the preparation of lectures aids them in organizing their own thinking, (2) the course is successful in teaching what the agency is doing and why it is being done, and (3) the gathering of small, informal discussion groups, led by administrative officials is highly conducive to healthy organizational morale. The employees are enthusiastic because the program gives them in a vivid manner information about their agency, and because it is their program, not superimposed upon them in a paternalistic fashion by top executives.—*William A. Grelle.*

149. Lipson, Leslie. **Education and training of personnel in New Zealand.** *Pub. Administration Rev.* 1 (3) Spring, 1941: 257-270.—Prior to 1912 the New

Zealand public service had defects like those in any civil service before the institution of a central personnel agency. Little attention was paid to the education of civil servants. A Civil Service Examination Act was adopted in 1900, but the scholastic standard was not high and the act covered only permanent employees and winked at the presence of the "temporaries." Candidates for specified posts, such as engineers, were required to possess advanced professional qualifications, but other courses of university study found less favor in official eyes. In-service training, likewise, had made only an embryonic start. For the most part, public servants were left to train themselves as best they might. Three prerequisites of a general staff training program were lacking—freedom from political interference in appointments, a regularized plan of classification, and a central personnel agency. These prerequisites were provided through the Public Service Act of 1912. The vast majority of clerical employees are normally recruited between the ages of 17 and 21 with educational qualifications corresponding to three years' work at a secondary school. University graduates and holders of professional diplomas are also admitted to the public service, their average age being well over 21. It is the well-accepted practice for public servants to seek a university degree or a professional diploma as part-time students, and special concessions are offered to those seeking a professional education. So actively have Public Service Commissioners sponsored the professional man that they now find it embarrassing to utilize his confrere educated in liberal arts. This ill-balanced policy was neither equitable nor wise. It concentrated on obtaining good technicians and paid little heed to the nonspecialized. Yet the tasks of general administration, of coordinating experts to achieve social values, require a broader outlook than a professional degree can impart. This tradition is an unfortunate consequence of the New Zealand conception of democracy. It has roots in the colonial antagonism toward the principle of an administrative class on the British model. In its reaction against the mother country, New Zealand has overlooked the merits of the administrative class. The remedy lies in equalizing opportunities of entrance to the universities, not in lowering the standard of entrance to the administrative class. In-service training, as distinct from education outside the service, received scant attention before 1939, with perfunctory lip service to its desirability. The early years of a young public servant's career were normally devoted to monotonous routine, a graveyard for his enthusiasm and initiative. In 1939 the principle was announced that "the training of every entrant to the Public Service will be supervised from the Office of the Commissioner" who is head of the central personnel agency. Each new recruit will be under continuous observation and will be watched for any talent he



displays. The ablest will be earmarked for promotion, the incompetent weeded out, the misfits transferred. In all departments someone of suitable personality and experience has been selected to act as departmental personnel officer and to supervise the training. For the purpose of training, 38 of the 44 departments are divided into seven groups. Within each group the department which is largest and most highly developed in internal organization aids its associates in training their small staffs. The basic purpose is to give trainees wide experience in the different branches of their own department and in other departments whose functions are akin. Besides in-service training, another recent development is the study of political science and public administration. A new course in public administration, adopted by Victoria College in 1939, is intended not as a specialized instruction in administrative technique but as a liberal education in the problems of modern government. The government established a number of Public Service Administration Scholarships, for which any member of the public services is eligible. For the first time in New Zealand the educational facilities enjoyed by professional officers are extended to the nonprofessional. The general administrator of the future will be educated as thoroughly as his technicians. A centrally supervised plan of in-service training and full-time education for administrative leadership have both been inaugurated. The one is complementary to the other. A thorough system of training on the job must be balanced by an advanced university education for those who will ultimately head the administrative hierarchy. Functioning separately, either scheme would lack counterpoise. Dovetailed together, the two may promote a rounded development.—*Edgar B. Young.*

150. Mapel, Eugene B. **Stimulating employee self-improvement.** *Personnel J.* 19 (9) March, 1941: 316-324.—Someone has said that a substantial percentage of industrial employees, who might be classified as unsatisfactory, at one time possessed skill and knowledge sufficient for the job. However, processes and techniques change, and it becomes the responsibility not only of employees but of supervisors to cooperate in keeping pace with job requirements. The use of such media as correspondence schools, trade extension classes, visual aids, vestibule schools, and conference training, has not been completely satisfactory as yet; therefore the search for new methods and techniques must continue. One major problem is how to stimulate employees to use the present training facilities more widely. One method that has been tried is the use of practical tests. For the training of supervisors, questionnaires on the subject of company policy, social legislation, and labor legislation have been designed to impart basic information, stimulate

discussion, and show to the individual where further study would be most effective. These questionnaires, really true-false or multiple choice tests, are given at the beginning of a conference and are followed by discussions of the correct answers. The number of questions should not be greater than can be discussed in one conference. The papers are not scored. For the training of tradesmen, the questionnaires or tests are similar, but serve the additional purpose of impressing upon those whose knowledge and skill is limited to one operation the importance of other phases of shop work. The tests are actually scored, in this case, the employee being notified of his standing among his fellow workers. An increase of over two hundred percent has been noted in the enrollment of adult trade classes in the fields where this testing technique has been used.—*Kenneth E. Dougan.*

151. Nicol, Eric A. **Management is training.** *J. of Educational Sociology* 14 (5) January, 1941: 298-308.—Inasmuch as all activity involves habit formation, training is taking place in every public agency and the value of such training is dependent upon the quality of leadership exercised by management. In spite of the introduction of training specialists there is still difference of opinion as to whether or not responsibility for training functions should be actually taken away from the line executive. The new philosophy based on the assumption that training can be accomplished only through improved supervision makes the task of the training specialist somewhat different. Sound management is training in that it must give to each supervisor and employee an understanding of what is expected of him and standards or objectives toward which to strive. This is best accomplished through "consultative supervision" i.e. the working out of problems with subordinates, through the medium of discussion and cooperative planning. The United States Civil Service Commission has developed a Management Training Formula which is illustrative of the kind of methods which many industrial organizations are using for solving their management problems. The formula calls for (1) classification of organizational structure in written form so that each individual can know where he fits into the picture, (2) a statement of standards of performance for each activity based upon the overall objective, and (3) analyses of individual job performance compared with the standards set. When differences are discovered a determination is made of the help needed, the source for such help, and a time schedule for overcoming the deficiency. Help is planned and provided in schools, through staff meetings, daily supervision, etc. At each level of the agency a council or conference is organized with each person in a supervisory position meeting regularly with those immediately responsible to him. Each

member of a discussion group becomes chairman of another and so on down to the employee who exercises no supervision, making an unbroken chain of communication from top to bottom and vice versa. In this type of management training program the training director becomes the technical or staff adviser on methods to top management and the line executive assumes a definite responsibility for training activities. Any extra burden to the executive is more than offset by the elimination of problems and responsibilities inherent in the old system of training which loads everything on the training specialist.—*Margaret Marshall.*

152. Stanley, David T. **The clerk's knowledge of his agency.** *Personnel Administration* 3 (4) December, 1940: 1-4.—The popular idea of the government clerk as an unimaginative drudge who has no interest in what he is doing would have less justification if lower-bracket employees were given more systematic, effective training to keep them informed of the program of which they are a part. Employees who know the objectives and major features of the program with which they work not only are more efficient, require less supervision, and are better fitted for promotion, but also are more likely to make up a unified, cooperative working force in which a higher morale is developed and maintained. The responsibility for giving employees a clear understanding of operations rests squarely with the agency. It is the agency which benefits, and it is only the agency that can give the necessary training conveniently, systematically, and in a manner that best meets its needs. Several methods of training are in use with varying degrees of success. Reliance upon supervisors is excellent for training employees in the actual operations of their jobs, but the basic information, which is a common need throughout the organization, can best be given by a central training unit. The provision of reading materials—reports, pamphlets, and particularly an employee handbook—is likely to bring about haphazard results by itself, but may be valuable if used as a basis for employee meetings. Such meetings, through discussions, moving pictures, and lectures, may supplement the reading material, emphasizing major points and adding illustrative detail. While the classroom atmosphere is to be avoided in training meetings for general clerical employees, formal courses have proved successful for new technical employees whose duties require a detailed knowledge of operations. Orientation interviews for individual employees are likely to consume a disproportionate amount of time, but if used, are more beneficial when they supplement and clarify required reading. While training is most often given employees soon after their appointment, present employees must not be over-

looked. Employees who were hired before an orientation program is started have learned something about the organization from their jobs, to be sure, but their knowledge needs to be systematized and supplemented. Reading, discussion meetings, formal courses, and lectures may be used in training present employees as well as appointees. Through their use, employees can be helped to retain the information they have acquired, to prepare themselves for promotion, and to keep up their interest and enthusiasm.—*William A. Grelle.*

153. Wilking, S. Vincent. **Reading ability and executive efficiency.** *Personnel Journal* 20 (1) May, 1941: 34-37.—Supercharged methods are being devised to short-cut unnecessary steps in goods production to meet the demands of the defense program. These methods are being applied almost exclusively to work below the executive level. But "most efficient" production requires a stepped-up tempo on the part of top management as well as of the line.

Executive duties resolve themselves into one important function: the quick formulation and execution of decisions, made not only with dispatch but with a high degree of accuracy after adequate deliberation on the factors involved in the problem at hand. The printed page affords the executive information on subjects requiring his decision, since few executives can personally investigate all the facts pertinent to the particular situation in question. Thus reading ability is one of the most important tools or skills which the executive possesses. To a large extent, his success depends on how well and quickly he assimilates that which the printed page offers him.

In a recent class designed to improve reading ability at a large eastern university a sizeable number of high ranking executives enrolled because of a felt need for improving their reading ability. That they were deficient in basic reading skills at the beginning of their training was obvious, and that they improved visibly in these same skills after a relatively short period of instruction was even more apparent. That decided acceleration of reading ability is possible is illustrated by the experience in this school, in which after fifteen class sessions of less than one hour each the average reading speed of college groups was increased by more than 100 words per minute. Assuming that an executive whose reading speed is 200 words per minute should take such training, it is likely that his reading efficiency could be improved 50 per cent.

Skimming, one phase of rapid reading, is a highly profitable practice when applied at the right time to the right material. A knowledge of, or location of the pattern in which the material is written, and the establishment of the relationships existing between the facts, generalizations and illustrations presented

in the printed page should go hand in hand with skimming. In short, an inadequate understanding of the organizational aspects of written material will do much to retard the reader's comprehension as well as speed. The executive who can unfailingly and speedily see each important point as the writer makes it, without being led astray by illustrations and digression, will cut his labor in half and double his effective comprehension. This phase of reading can be taught efficiently and in a reasonably short period of time.

Efforts at improving reading ability are not all directed at increasing speed. Many subjects require thorough assimilation by the reader. In order to facilitate the assimilative process, attention can be focused on so-called "associational" reading. This holds only when the material read is employed as a spring-board to the thoughts and interpretations of the reader. Summarized, it implies critical analysis of materials, in which the reader brings to bear his own experience, draws overlooked generalizations warranted by the facts presented, rules out bias, looks for applications where the author has seen none. This type of reading is highly important to the executive called upon to fulfill a creative function. From it may result improvements in production, merchandising or advertising methods stemming from the executive mind.

Improvements in these types of reading can be accomplished through qualified instruction. It is not, however, advisable that one who is untrained in the special methods of remedial reading be allowed to institute any such programs for executive training. In the hands of a trained reading specialist using adequate and tested diagnostic instruments, a remedial program might well result in the tangible dividends of more work more efficiently done.—*Walter Evers.*

## WORK TERMS; CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

154. Cooper, Joseph D. **Organizing an employee activities program.** *Personnel Administration* 3 (9) May, 1941: 6-10.—It is the objective of an employee activities program to assist the individual in adjusting to his new environment by providing means of social and recreational expression. From such a program, which encourages balanced and wholesome living, an agency receives benefits of reduced turnover and increased productive capacity. The major fields of a total program of employee activities and welfare together with some typical activities are these: (1) *Personal Welfare*, including credit unions, and group insurance, hospitalization, and medical service plans; (2) *Recreational*, including competitive sports, both intra- and inter-mural, and non-competitive athletic activities, such as hikes, horse-back rides, bicycling, and skating; (3) *Aesthetic*, in-

cluding music, choral, dramatic, educational, and artistic pursuits, and (4) *Social*, including dances, picnics, bridge parties, chess clubs, and the like. Before any effective work can be done, it is necessary to establish an official policy encouraging employee activities. Financing the program may be accomplished through a general annual solicitation of all employees. A typical organization to foster employee activities is an association or council of representatives of each activity. The elected officers of this association or council would have responsibility for liaison with management and would exercise the planning, coordination, and promotional functions. The personnel office may serve as the initial organizing influence for an employee activities program and may continue to perform such functions as the provision of liaison on official policy, the overseeing of finances, and the establishment of extensive employee information services.—*William A. Grelle.*

155. Unsigned. **Health of war workers in Great Britain.** *Monthly Labor Rev.* 52 (4) April 1941: 924-927.—Modern war effort is as much dependent upon the economic resources of a country as it is upon the size and skill of the fighting services. The economic resources depend on three factors—skilled and unskilled workers, machinery and materials, and the health of the workers. This last factor is generally forgotten. As is always the case in such periods of danger, the first move is to extend the hours of work. In the last war men were required to work 80 hours a week and women a few hours less—77. Studies were made on this problem and it was concluded that 60 hours a week for men and 54 hours for women gave the highest output. During May, 1940, when the war outlook was quite black for Britain, hours of work were lengthened to 12 hours a day, 7 days a week. The same results followed—a drop in the output of the workers. Mr. Bevin, the Minister of Labor and National Service, with the aid of an advisory committee decided to return to the more efficient hours—54 to 60 hours for men and 48 to 54 hours for women. The "blackout" regulations have required new thought on lighting and ventilation. Both of these physical conditions greatly affect the health of the workers. Another matter that has received attention is proper food for the employees. It has been found advisable to provide light meals before starting work and hot meals for night workers.—*Francis King.*

## EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

156. Macmahon, Arthur W. **The New York City transit system: public ownership, civil service, and collective bargaining.** *Political Science Q.* 56 (2) June, 1941: 161-198. The unification of the New York rapid transit systems under the city government, finally consummated in 1940, has raised serious prob-

lems in the application of civil service to a strongly unionized public enterprise. One of the three major elements involved in the consolidation, the Independent Subway System, was already city-owned and had several years of experience under civil service. The IRT and BMT, the other elements in the unification, had previously been privately operated and had executed closed shop agreements with the Transport Workers' union, a powerful and militant CIO group. Upon unification, the union demanded that the city recognize these agreements, and it later requested the discharge of certain employees, delinquent in their union dues. The mayor stated that such action would be unlawful, denied the right of transit workers to strike against the city, and asserted that "separate agreements covering employment of civil service employees cannot be made with any group of employees." Subsequently, the city filed a complaint in the courts against the union, asking for a general settlement and holding that the city was without power to carry out or renew the previous agreements. Meanwhile, virtually all the employees have been covered into civil service. The commission has organized a transit bureau, has already classified some 16,000 of 25,000 posts, and has given examinations for new and vacant positions. The union leaders criticize civil service primarily because it endangers collective bargaining. They also feel that it interferes with seniority, the time-honored system of promotion in railway industries; that it offers no protection against dismissal because positions may be abolished; and that it does not affect the major conditions of employment, such as wages, hours, etc. Their legal argument is based upon the distinction, denied by the city, between "governmental" and "proprietary" functions as justification of different labor policies from those applied to other city employees. The city's apparent contention that labor contracts cannot be entered into by public bodies is doubtful from the legal standpoint and, in view of present governmental expansion in business spheres, might seriously weaken the entire labor movement if generally applied. The recognition of a union as sole bargaining agent and even the closed shop might prove advantageous in the government management of such enterprises if authorized by the legislature. A proposed compromise solution of the immediate situation is a composite labor representation committee, elected proportionally, to act as bargaining agent for all employees.—*Frederick C. Mosher.*

157. Zucker, M. William. *Grievances under the Whitley Councils*. *Personnel Administration* 3 (9) May, 1941: 10-14.—Shortly after the last world war, the system of Whitley Councils, which had been established to adjust the problems of employees and employers in British industry was extended to the civil service. An elaborate set of joint councils

was established, commencing with the National Council and working down into departmental councils and local committees. Through this machinery negotiations are carried on between the "official side," composed of the higher administrative and policy formulating officers of the Government, and the "staff side," composed of representatives of the employee unions and associations. The subject matter dealt with by the National Whitley Council has included governmental reorganization, reclassification, compensation plans, formulae for the settlement of employee grievances and disciplinary actions, promotions, educational programs and a host of other topics. However, the specific application of principles determined by the National Council has been largely the responsibility of the departmental and local councils. Moreover, many problems are solved, not through formal council agreements, but through informal discussions which the existence of the council machinery makes possible. In matters of discipline or of adverse service ratings, the employee is notified in writing of the charges against him; however, the staff side claims that no machinery exists to provide a judicial hearing. Matters concerning emolument, interpreted to include hours of work and leave as well as pay, are given informal hearings before the Industrial Court. The councils are not so much a means of balancing the power of administrative management with the power of the employee as they are a system by which the government may utilize the initiative and constructive cooperation of employees to assist it in fulfilling its function of administration.—*William A. Grelle.*

### SEPARATION; RETIREMENT

158. Marsh, Harry W. *The case for the "open back door."* *Nat. Municipal Rev.* XXX (5) May, 1941: 275-278. There is little that is new found in the legal requirements set up over the past years pointing to a solution of the discipline problem. Early advocates of the merit system advanced the theory that "If we keep the front door carefully guarded, the back door will take care of itself." If a dismissal was political, no advantage could be gained as the newcomer would come from an eligible list. Nevertheless the right was recognized of employees to demand a statement of reasons for a dismissal and an opportunity to present their side of the case. This being done, however, the question of final disposition was left solely in the hands of the appointing officer, except insofar as procedure prescribed in the law was reviewable in the courts. Often unprejudiced observers may hold a different opinion on a case from the appointing officer as to sufficiency of reasons for the disciplinary action taken. Organized employee groups have led in bringing pressure for a reviewing agency such as the commission, an advisory committee or the courts to determine suf-



iciency of reasons. This is the "closed back door." Such provisions in the law do more harm than good, for appointing officers will refuse to take disciplinary action for fear of being placed on trial themselves. Instances of unjust removal which can be so demonstrated are so few as to be quite unimpressive as justification for "a closed back door." The recent article in the *National Municipal Review* of a study made in Michigan on the "open back door" gives no basis for the conclusion that dismissals were made in any substantial number for purely political reasons, or against the best interests of the service itself. New installations find political conditions likely to develop which will disappear after a period of time. The findings in the 127 cases cited were not conclusive. Granted that the reviewing agency was not motivated by political considerations, it does not follow that another personnel director and another commission might not have found many of the 127 cases meritorious, rather than unjustifiable, removals. It is impossible to say that removals are

justifiable or unjustifiable by the single process of comparing the differences of opinion between the head of the department making the removal and one reviewing agency, however honest and disinterested it may proclaim itself to be. Also false is the conclusion seemingly drawn that the open back door is unsatisfactory when four departments were responsible for 57% of the dismissals. Concentration of alleged unjust dismissals is no proof of the failure of the open back door method. The remedy is to be found in preventing the unjustifiable removal from ever occurring. This may be gained through the use of intelligent and modern employment management methods allowing every possible means of adjustments of personnel problems to be made before any dismissal action is taken. Employment of full-time personnel directors in operating departments is recommended. The closed back door has done more damage to the service as a whole than ever was done to the service by unjustifiable dismissals.—Ray L. Wilbur, Jr.

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#### END OF VOLUME TWO

The October (No. 4) issue of PUBLIC PERSONNEL REVIEW concludes Volume 2 of the publication, covering the calendar year 1941. An index to this volume will be issued separately and will be sent to all subscribers with the next issue of the magazine.

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